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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1992 regular session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York.
on Monday, 15 June 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

OPENING STATEMENTS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

1. The CHAIRMAN said that from earliest times, children had symbolized the continuity of life. It was the universality of concern for the well-being of children which had brought nations together in the historic World Summit for Children in 1990, at which the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s and the Plan of Action had been adopted. Despite such concern, however, and more than four decades after the establishment of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), it was children all over the world who suffered the most. As late as 1990, 38 countries had registered under-five mortality rates ranging from 142 to 297 per 1,000 live births, and in six countries, 20 to 40 per cent of infants had been born with low birth weight. The struggle against poverty and deprivation was perhaps the most decisive one of the twentieth century, and UNICEF, through its advocacy efforts and programmes was at the forefront of that struggle.

2. The universal child immunization programme was among the most successful of the Fund's efforts. The achievement of 80 per cent immunization coverage in 1990 had been sustained in 1991. In October 1991, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) had convened an international policy conference on "Ending Hidden Hunger" at Montreal, Canada, in order to mobilize support for micronutrient goals. The UNICEF/WHO "baby-friendly" hospital initiative, launched in June 1991, had focused world-wide attention on the need to promote and protect breast-feeding.

3. The Fund's highest priority, however, had been devoted to an effective follow-up to the World Summit for Children. Most countries were currently engaged in efforts to prepare national programmes of action. To date, 45 countries had finalized their programmes; preparations were under way in 60 countries, and 28 others had submitted draft outlines.

4. The status of women throughout the developing world had emerged as a major issue in 1991 and 1992. Without the mobilization of women, child development could not be achieved. Despite overwhelming evidence that improvement in the status of women, particularly in the economic sphere, had a substantial positive impact on child nutrition and health, United Nations programmes and advocacy efforts had so far tended to neglect that aspect of development. Programmes for women must include girls, since it was at puberty that active discrimination against women began. It was therefore crucial to devote greater attention to the promotion of health care, safe motherhood, family planning, nutrition, literacy, skills development and employment for both adolescent girls and women. Like universal child immunization, the improvement of the status of women must attain the dimensions of a global movement. The Government of India and UNICEF had recently sponsored a regional seminar on women in order to highlight the issue, and it was to be hoped that similar seminars would be held elsewhere in the developing world.

(The Chairman)

5. Widespread moderate and severe malnutrition continued to affect, on average, more than 33 per cent of children from birth to four years of age in countries with very high under-five mortality rates. With more than 177 million malnourished children in the world, and with the number of births likely to reach a peak in the year 2000, providing supplementary nutrition to more and more children should become a top priority.

6. Another major issue for a growing number of countries was structural adjustment, which almost always led to reductions in social-sector spending. UNICEF should begin to mobilize public opinion in the developed world in support of a global effort to assist countries undergoing economic readjustment. The long-term sustainability of direct interventions in the social sector was also in question. As the costs of delivering such programmes were increasing day by day, alternatives must be found. Institutions must be developed which would enable the poor to manage the programmes on their own. Successful examples of community initiative throughout the world must be identified, studied and shared.

7. In that context, the question of universal education required urgent attention. UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should take the lead in helping various countries to formulate action plans with time-bound, quantified targets for literacy levels, enrolment and other educational indicators.

8. Much remained to be done with regard to the children's vaccine initiative launched in 1990. UNICEF should strengthen the capacities of developing countries to produce the vaccines, the medicines and the equipment required for the achievement of the Fund's goals.

9. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director) said that he wished to pay tribute to the 40,000 children who died each day, largely from preventable causes. Such deaths were a waste of the world's most precious resources.

10. It was becoming clear that any society which could not care for its children could not regard its development as in any sense sustainable. In that context, UNICEF welcomed the incorporation into the Plan of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the "Earth Summit") of all the goals of the World Summit for Children, and the Conference's explicit endorsement of those goals as essential to preserving the Earth.

11. Over the past decade, a world-wide movement had arisen on behalf of child survival and development which could only be described as revolutionary. To date, 117 countries had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which, for the first time in history, established standards for society's obligations to children. In the 18 months since the World Summit for Children, most countries had not only sustained their 1990 achievements in the area of universal child immunization, but had made progress towards the goal

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of eradicating poliomyelitis and attaining 90 per cent immunization coverage by the year 2000. In 1991, WHO and UNICEF had been approached by infant formula manufacturers anxious to collaborate in ending free and low-cost distribution of milk substitutes, which were the main obstacle to reviving breast-feeding. That had opened the door to the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative. In addition, the goal of ending free or low-cost distribution of infant formula in all countries by the end of 1992 had now been fulfilled in 105 countries.

12. The Donors Conference on Assistance to African Children, to be convened by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Dakar in November 1992, would be of great importance for children everywhere. The seriousness with which each African country and each donor country responded to the OAU invitation would be the key test in 1992 of its commitment to the goals of the World Summit for Children and of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

13. The situation in Yugoslavia, in several of the Republics of the former Soviet Union and in the Horn of Africa raised the issue of protecting children and other vulnerable groups from the horrors of civil war. One step forward in addressing that concern had been the establishment of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, with which the UNICEF secretariat would collaborate fully. It had been reassuring to witness the positive response to the Secretary-General's appeal for $850 million with which to mitigate the unprecedented drought in southern Africa; in one day, that appeal had generated contributions totalling $650 million.

14. As reflected in the proposals which were before the Executive Board, the response by UNICEF to the urgent human needs in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the new independent States would be to promote the ethic of a "first call for children" as economic restructuring took place. At the same time, there would be no significant diversion of UNICEF resources from Africa and other poorer parts of the developing world.

15. He expressed appreciation to all donors that had maintained their level of support in 1991 and 1992 after the remarkable increase of 1990. A number of countries, especially Norway, Sweden and Finland, had even increased their contributions in national currencies; that had helped to offset the shortfall of approximately $60 million, due mainly to the strengthening of the United States dollar in 1991.

16. Far more important than income for the Fund's programmes and operations was the overall level of resources for children . Since the World Summit for Children, allocations for child-related programmes in several national budgets had increased by billions of dollars. The United States Congress had appropriated approximately $8 billion in additional funding for domestic programmes over three years. In too many countries, however, too little had been done to increase resources for children. If all major donors raised the proportion of their bilateral official development assistance for human

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priorities to 20 per cent, an additional $4.6 billion could be raised for programmes for women and children. That would amount to approximately two thirds of the estimated $6 to $7 billion in additional external assistance which would be required if the World Summit goals were to be met.

17. During the past decade, there had been a search for ways of ensuring that UNICEF responded more effectively to the challenges of the newly emerging world, which had concentrated on administrative efficiency, strengthened governance and guidance, and more focused priorities for programmes. There had been a number of initiatives to achieve greater administrative efficiency in the secretariat, better determination and oversight of policies and objectives by the Executive Board, and improved governance in general. The Board - which now had 41 members - had also changed its procedures in order to be able to take decisions in a more organized and structured manner.

18. The secretariat had invited members of the Board to meet regularly throughout the year, each time on a different issue, in order to be briefed, to offer initial reactions and to consult their respective Governments. There were also pre-Board briefings in capitals, and briefings at UNICEF headquarters prior to the annual session. The Bureau of the Board had become a stronger, more expert group which was able to provide advice and feedback to the secretariat between annual sessions.

19. As examples of the search for better focusing of priorities and objectives, he cited recognition of the importance of low-cost, mass application techniques and technologies, and the various programme initiatives, notably the consolidation of commitments and opportunities at the World Summit for Children. There were many other ideas and proposals, several offering a great potential for further development and new thinking. He himself had two contributions to make to those discussions: one in the arena of overall reform of the United Nations system, and the other in that of the continuing evolution of UNICEF's own governance and effective guidance. In his view, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, rather than the Executive Board, were the appropriate forums for consideration of and action on the various proposals for reforming the overall system, although it could be useful for those bodies to draw upon the experience of UNICEF and other organizations. He was therefore circulating a note containing suggestions from UNICEF's working experience on how the operational activities of the United Nations system might be improved. One example of that experience was a joint UNICEF/UNFPA policy paper on inter-agency collaboration on population and family planning.

20. There was also much more that could be attempted within the UNICEF arena in terms of developing its own governance and management. There were a number of measures, which should ultimately have a place in long-term reform, that could improve the Executive Board's capacity to guide and govern the secretariat, and they could be taken without altering the mandate or pre-empting longer-term models and standards. As an alternative to marathon

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sessions of the Board with longer and longer agendas of more and more detailed issues, amounting to endurance tests for delegations and secretariat alike, an expanded Bureau, open to any member of the Board and better representing the full membership of the Board, meeting for a day or two every two or three months with a specific agenda circulated in advance, preparing more thoroughly the issues on the Board's agenda and identifying priority issues for consideration, and addressing and determining specific issues or narrow categories of issues identified by the Board, could make for more effective governance and managerial oversight.

21. He expressed his appreciation to the members of the Reference Group for providing guidance to the secretariat throughout the year as proposals on the structure and format of budget documents were prepared for the current session of the Board. There had been a joint effort to provide greater clarity and transparency in UNICEF documents dealing with income projections, financial plans, staffing, classification of posts and staff costs, programme proposals, including the country programme recommendations and global funds, and the administrative and programme support budget. The revised format and related guidelines, if approved by the Board, would be applied in the preparation of the administrative and programme support budget for the 1994-1995 biennium, as well as the global fund programme budget and country programme recommendations for review and approval by the Board at its session in 1993.

22. As for the future location of UNICEF headquarters, the secretariat had been seeking to identify realistic possibilities without preconceived notions. Initially, it had focused almost exclusively on basic logistical and financial considerations - for example, where UNICEF could find accommodation which provided the best and most complete facilities at a cost which preserved maximum resources for programmes in the developing countries - but as that process had advanced, the host city had turned its attention to preserving the viability for UNICEF of the United Nations district and, in particular, UNICEF House. In response to the competition from other potential locations, substantially improved terms had been offered for the long term, and the City of New York would help UNICEF to find workable additional facilities nearby for expansion. Discussions continued, and it was his belief that a better bargain could be struck.

23. The second phase of the search required a broader perspective. The challenge was to balance complete logistical efficiency, maximum cost reduction and the many locational factors which determined headquarters effectiveness, especially the relationship with partner agencies, members of the Board and other government representatives, the leadership and Secretariat of the United Nations, the non-governmental organizations, the media and other important external contacts. Decisions on long-term commitments should not be made prematurely, but UNICEF should be in position to act quickly and decisively when the time was right.

(Mr. Grant)

24. Despite the many storm clouds overhead and on the horizon, never before in the history of UNICEF had the children of the world stood on such a bright and promising threshold to their future, and never before had the possibility been so great that nations could, if the will was there, devote adequate resources and attention to meeting the basic needs of children and families, and alleviating the worst aspects of the poverty and underdevelopment which crippled them, and in turn their future. The effectiveness of UNICEF derived from its vision and from its capacity to appreciate the broader context affecting the lives and well-being of children and the potential of well-meaning people, organizations and Governments to change children's lives for the better. Many problems lay ahead, not least the problem of money, but it was an exciting task and an unprecedented opportunity, and a challenge which the secretariat welcomed and embraced with enthusiasm.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

25. The CHAIRMAN invited comments on the provisional annotated agenda contained in document E/ICEF/1992/1/Rev.1.

26. Mr. REINO (Observer for Portugal), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the Community and its member States had taken note of the declaration of the representatives of the peoples of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro of 27 April 1992, which stated that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continued the international legal and political personality of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That declaration raised questions related to the continuity of Yugoslavia's membership in international organizations, including the United Nations, which were under consideration. The European Community and its member States had not accepted the automatic continuity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international organizations, including the United Nations, and reserved their position on the question. They therefore considered that the participation in the current session of the delegation in question was without prejudice to future decisions which might be taken by the European Community and its member States on that and related issues.

27. Mr. HUSLID (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, referred the Board to the statement made by the Nordic Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 4 May 1992, concerning the succession of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international organizations, including the United Nations. It was the position of the Nordic countries not to accept the automatic continuity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international organizations, including the United Nations. They considered that the participation in the current session of the delegation in question was without prejudice to further decisions.

28. Mrs. POTTER STEWART (United States of America) said that the organizational session had enabled the members of the Board and the Bureau to prepare better for the regular session. Organizational sessions would continue to be a useful planning mechanism for future regular sessions. She welcomed the topics selected for the informal sessions, but noted that such sessions were not substitutes for the formal discussion needed for formal decision-making. As UNICEF grew, the schedules for sessions of its Board became tighter and more complex, and her delegation hoped that the rationalization measures agreed to at the organizational session would help to reduce the burden of work. However, it was also clear that more could and should be done to streamline and facilitate the work of the Board.

29. The United States noted that the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in meetings during the current session raised questions relating to Yugoslavia's status as a Board member, but it did not believe that the present was the appropriate time to seek a resolution of all such questions. It wished to place on record, however, its view that the proceedings of the current session were without prejudice to their ultimate resolution.

30. The CHAIRMAN said she would take it that the Board wished to adopt the provisional agenda contained in document E/ICEF/1992/1/Rev.1.

31. It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE

32. Mr. KOUCHNER (France) said that nearly two years had passed since the World Summit for Children, and although many countries had acted on the commitments made at that time, not all the promises had been kept and not all the problems solved. Much remained to be done, and it seemed that the more one acted, the more one discovered the immensity of the problems. There had been much talk about the Earth at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, but had there been enough talk about children, and especially the children under threat in the streets of Rio de Janeiro?

33. France had increased its contribution to UNICEF by 45 per cent since 1991, and had, in close cooperation with UNICEF, undertaken intense and innovatory humanitarian action. In addition, France had adopted a programme costing 20 million francs for research, training and evaluation to support the decisions of the World Summit for Children in the areas of maternal and child health, nutrition, family planning and education. France also looked to the 1993 conference of ministers from the francophone countries responsible for children for a coordinated response to the World Summit for Children.

34. In the two years since the Summit, the world had been subjected to a succession of conflicts of which children, being among the most vulnerable members of society, were the first innocent victims. During the past year, the Executive Board had been greatly concerned at the plight of Iraqi and Kurdish children, and in spite of UNICEF action on their behalf, their

(Mr. Kouchner, France)

situation had not improved sufficiently. Despite continued international protection and free elections, the future of the Kurdish children of north-eastern Iraq remained a sombre one. What had been accomplished thanks to the United Nations in protecting the Iraqi Kurds was a matter for pride, but was even more a reason for not abandoning them. France remained as always at the disposal of UNICEF to carry out humanitarian operations.

35. Since the Summit, major conflicts had erupted in other regions, setting demanding humanitarian challenges before UNICEF. Four thousand women and children had been evacuated from Monrovia; UNICEF was actively involved in efforts to protect vulnerable population groups in Nagorny-Karabakh and similar efforts were under way in Dubrovnik.

36. Despite the various cease-fires which had been instituted, the bombardment of Dubrovnik had continued. The situation there and in Sarajevo remained insupportable, rendering essential a follow-up to all the UNICEF missions to the region.

37. The courageous work of journalists had brought distress calls to UNICEF from many regions. The flexibility and innovative strength of UNICEF had made it possible for France to direct humanitarian assistance to women and children in those regions. The international response to such distress calls would continue to improve, in line with the General Assembly resolutions sponsored by his Government and the Security Council resolutions dealing with humanitarian work and access to victims.

38. He stressed the need to use those legal instruments for the benefit of endangered civilian populations and, in particular, the children of Dubrovnik and Sarajevo. Humanitarian interventions were dangerous but they were still possible, as evidenced by the two French humanitarian missions to Sarajevo, taking emergency medical supplies to the hospital and food for starving children. On behalf of the organizations Pharmaciens sans frontières, Médecins du Monde and Ambassade des enfants, he was appealing urgently to UNICEF to ensure that the United Nations and its agencies would not abandon the victims of the conflict in that area.

39. Responding to the plight of the children of Sarajevo had not deflected his country from its efforts in the third world. Among other undertakings, France had mounted a major humanitarian programme to provide food aid to the population of Mogadishu, in cooperation with UNICEF and the few remaining non-governmental organizations in Somalia.

40. The scope and cost of such emergency operations was too great for the resources of a single organization, however efficient, and his Government had therefore actively supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182, on strengthening the coordination of emergency operations by the United Nations. He believed that the reforms called for under that resolution would not undermine the independence of the agencies but would, on the

(Mr. Kouchner, France)

contrary, help them make optimal use of their available resources and skills; unfortunately, such cooperation had not been possible in the case of Yugoslavia. UNICEF had a central role to play in such coordinated efforts, and its position was strengthened by the appointment of its Director of Emergency Programmes, Mr. La Munière, to head the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva. The establishment of that unit in Geneva would provide UNICEF with a strong, decentralized structure enabling it to assert its authority in such sectors as humanitarian aid and aid to the countries of the East.

41. Current emergencies should not, however, divert UNICEF from its primary vocation: assisting development through long-term activities oriented towards children, such as had been exemplified by its 12-year involvement in Cambodia, as the sole United Nations agency present in that country, and by the encouraging results of the Bamako Initiative. There should also be a satisfactory balance between programme costs and effectiveness: a case in point was the expanded programme on immunization, which, despite its considerable gains, absorbed a large portion of the budget to the detriment of other priority programmes, and should therefore be carefully re-examined.

42. The new challenges facing UNICEF, such as the transition of the States of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, required it to adapt its development strategy. The analysis of emergency health situations should be followed by cooperation with Governments, non-governmental organizations and other organizations to study the problems and to submit new proposals. While the report and analyses prepared by the joint WHO/UNICEF mission to the Commonwealth of Independent States had been of a high quality, such missions should not be restricted to fund-raising: UNICEF should use its knowledge of local conditions to foster current projects and those prepared by other organizations, as it had done in Romania, and it could even assist bilateral operations.

43. He commended the Budget Format Reference Group for the substantial progress it had achieved in proposing reforms, with the active cooperation of UNICEF services.

44. If UNICEF was to respond to the challenges for the 1990s identified by the Executive Director in his report, it was essential to mobilize all the potential that could benefit the mother and child. In that belief, France was following with particular interest such initiatives as the forthcoming OAU Conference on Assistance to African Children, since the African continent was, more than ever before, at the centre of UNICEF concern.

45. He urged UNICEF to give maximum attention to the problem of the hundreds of thousands of children orphaned by AIDS. It was essential to create a social structure to accommodate those children, and not to consign them to orphanages. In addition, careful thought should be given to the breast-feeding campaign, in view of the possibility of transmitting the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) through the mother's milk.

(Mr. Kouchner, France)

46. He commended the vital role played by the National Committees in raising public awareness, thereby providing the Fund with its best form of support, as evidenced by the US$ 24 million raised by the French Committee in 1991.

47. While UNICEF remained largely free of the scourge of conformism, that unfortunately was not true of all international institutions, which were not always capable of adapting to the upheavals of history. It was essential for all such organizations to espouse a new world ethic and to take action on an international scale to prevent conflicts, disasters and famines. Before the new world order was proclaimed, it was essential to ensure that such an order would ensure the welfare of all children whose lives had been endangered. The French President had repeatedly affirmed that to assist a person in need did not violate the principle of non-interference. The new forms of collective crimes committed against society necessitated the implementation of new legal provisions. That would not constitute interference, but modern solidarity, fully consistent with the spirit of democracy.

48. Ms. RAVLUM (Norway) said that the reduction of ideological conflict and the movement towards democracy in many countries had increased opportunities to protect the rights and interests of children, but that economic stagnation, particularly in parts of Africa, war, drought and the AIDS pandemic threatened to undermine any progress.

49. UNICEF had played an important role in helping Governments to develop plans of action in line with that launched at the World Summit for Children, and to integrate human development considerations into their own national development planning. Many countries had reviewed their legislation in the light of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, often with technical assistance from UNICEF. In Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had prepared a strategy document for assistance to children, whereby greater emphasis would be placed on child-targeted measures and activities in sectors of particular importance to children, such as children's rights, health and nutrition, basic education, care and early stimulation of children, and assistance to children in difficult circumstances. Partner countries and non-governmental organizations receiving funding from the Norwegian Government would be encouraged to give priority to child-targeted activities.

50. The encouraging democratic trends in many developing countries and the new international emphasis on human development had rendered UNICEF's role within the United Nations system more vital than ever. The primary challenge facing many developing countries was to promote human development at a time of economic restructuring and severe financial constraints in the public sector. UNICEF had a key role to play in assisting Governments in meeting that challenge, particularly through the follow-up to the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children. Cooperation between different agencies, in particular UNDP and UNICEF, was of great benefit to Governments in the preparation of human development plans and initiatives. UNICEF should further develop its cooperation with the development banks, particularly the World Bank, placing at their disposal its knowledge of local conditions. To that

(Ms. Ravlum, Norway)

end, it was necessary to strengthen UNICEF analytical capacity and competence in development issues and policies at headquarters and, more particularly, in the field.

51. The new international climate provided a historic opportunity for the renewal of the United Nations system, while increased multilateral cooperation was essential to overcome the world's new social, economic and environmental problems. The Nordic United Nations Project had highlighted the need for better coordination system-wide and at the national level, and its recommendations had had a positive response from many quarters. The reform process would be further advanced by the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in July 1992, which, she hoped, would propose measures to improve the financing and governance of United Nations funds and programmes, and to strengthen the system as a whole.

52. With regard to the issue of governance, Norway believed that the Executive Board, in its current form, should only deal with the overall issues of strategies and programme and financial priorities, while a smaller body should be concerned with their detailed scrutiny and the corresponding guidance to the secretariat.

53. Norway had always agreed that priority should be given to Africa and had advocated that more resources should be channelled to that continent. It was concerned, therefore, that the supplementary funding programme had resulted in Africa's share of UNICEF resources remaining at approximately one third of total programming. UNICEF should spend more of its resources in Africa, and donors that favoured supplementary funding should take into account the resulting imbalances.

54. With regard to family planning, her delegation looked forward, in future reports, to evidence of progress in the integration of those activities into UNICEF health and advocacy programmes. She noted that in some countries with rather weak administrations and large UNICEF programmes, there was a temptation for UNICEF to take over the execution of activities in the interests of expediency. It was extremely important that all programmes, especially in countries where the need for assistance was great, should aim to strengthen national structures and institutions.

55. Norway wished to see UNICEF strengthen and grow, and was concerned that the funding of UNICEF programmes was not equitably distributed among donor nations. As the third largest government donor to UNICEF, her Government urged other Governments to show greater generosity towards the organization. While future funding remained uncertain and UNICEF had shown understandable conservatism in the plans and estimates prepared for the current session, Norway believed that ambitious goals should be set and that UNICEF should rely on increased efficiency, using the latest technical aids and improved organization, rather than the expansion of staff and administrative projects, to achieve those goals.

56. Mr. MOMBESHORA (Zimbabwe) said that UNICEF was meeting at a crucial time when the world leaders had demonstrated their commitment to safeguarding the well-being of the planet and the prosperity of its people at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. He hoped that the Conference would lead to a greater appreciation of the debilitating problems afflicting the developing countries. New democratic mechanisms were required, designed to integrate environmental and development concerns without imposing conditions, improve the terms of trade, relieve the burden of foreign debt, provide greater access to markets, make technology and financial resources available to developing countries, and reverse the net transfer of resources from developing countries to developed countries.

57. As President Mugabe had stated to the General Assembly in 1991, the establishment of a favourable international economic environment was indispensable to the success of the development of developing countries. Such an environment required debt payment with a human face. As stated in the Executive Director's report (E/ICEF/1992/2, part II), there had been a drop in real resource flows to sub-Saharan Africa from US$ 24.6 billion in 1986 to US$ 23.3 billion in 1990. In those insupportable circumstances, it would be impossible for Africa to realize the targets set in the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

58. Document E/ICEF/1992/L.4 outlined the steps that Africa itself was taking towards the achievement of child survival, protection and development, but the level of support accorded Africa was inadequate to its huge requirements and the diversity of its problems, and he regretted that the document had not pointed out the higher returns per dollar which could be realized by investing in Africa.

59. Southern Africa was currently undergoing the worst drought of the century, which threatened to leave 18 million people facing starvation, famine and disease. Agricultural yields in Zimbabwe, traditionally the granary of the region, were expected to drop to 25 per cent of normal levels, adding further hardship to those already caused by the country's current economic reform programme. The scope and magnitude of the drought seriously endangered the country's entire economic structure, and a negative growth rate of 7 to 12 per cent had been forecast for 1992-1993. Massive imports of food were required; food aid would be needed for 4.5 million people in the rural areas, including 1.2 million children under five and 0.8 million lactating and pregnant women, and disabled and elderly persons. An appeal had been launched by the United Nations and the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) as the first stage in a continuing process of monitoring and assessing emergency needs. Thanking the countries and donors that had already responded to the appeal, he also took the opportunity to urge the international community to continue to provide the necessary support for Zimbabwe and the SADCC region.

(Mr. Mombeshora, Zimbabwe)

60. The severe impact of the drought on the region had revealed the inability of the countries to respond to natural disasters, and highlighted the need for disaster-relief actions by the international community to provide a basis for post-drought recovery and long-term development efforts in the SADCC region.

61. The region was still reeling from the destructive consequences and destabilization policies of apartheid, and the situation of children in the SADCC region, as described in the 1989 UNICEF report "Children on the Frontline", was as true in 1992 as it had been in 1989. It was mistaken to consider apartheid a thing of the past: apartheid had merely changed its face, and thousands of refugee and displaced children continued to suffer from Pretoria's actions.

62. He commended the peace initiatives taken by Presidents dos Santos of Angola and Chissano of Mozambique, and expressed Zimbabwe's grave concern over the violence continuing in South Africa with the apparent involvement of the de Klerk regime. Zimbabwe called for an international initiative to be mounted to end the senseless violence in South Africa, in line with the recommendations of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the OAU Ad Hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government of Southern Africa.

63. Particular importance was attached to the proposed OAU Conference on Assistance to African Children, scheduled to be held in Dakar in November 1992, which provided an incentive to many African Governments to complete their own national plans of action in time for the Conference. Zimbabwe had produced a plan of action tailored to its own 1991-1996 five-year national development plan, which took cognizance of its existing programmes and addressed such new problems as street children, drug abuse, AIDS, child abuse and violence against women. While satisfactory progress had been made in the preparation of the plan, resources were urgently required, particularly to address the AIDS pandemic which threatened to erode the valuable gains made by Zimbabwe in health and education services. Zimbabwe sought supplementary funding for its AIDS programme in the amount of US$ 10,275,000 for the biennium 1992-1994.

64. He regretted the diversion of international funding away from Africa to other regions, as was evident from the decline in real terms of the share of supplementary funding contributions designated for Africa.

65. Ms. POULSEN (Denmark) said that UNICEF had two comparative advantages. The first was its field-based and field-oriented organization, whose primary mission was to support the provision of basic services for the survival, development and protection of children, and to improve the status of women in families and communities in developing countries. The second was in the area of advocacy and social mobilization. The Fund's own judgement of its strengths was compatible with the findings of the Danish study, issued in 1991, on the performance of multilateral organizations at the field level, which included UNICEF.

(Ms. Poulsen, Denmark)

66. UNICEF had achieved its unique position at the field level through extensive decentralization, which allowed field offices to cooperate directly with Governments in the preparation and implementation of country programmes. That wise strategy had significantly improved the situation of children and mothers throughout the world.

67. Over the past years, the Fund's focus on global goals had increased, and the heavy emphasis from headquarters on the attainment of those goals in a relatively short period of time could jeopardize the country programming process. It was important that Governments and communities were not reduced to the status of mere recipients, but were treated as absolute equals in the development process. That could be achieved only if local communities and Governments were able to influence the decision-making process.

68. The section on management implications for UNICEF in the Fund's medium-term plan for 1992-1995 (E/ICEF/1992/3) did not give any clear indication that field offices participated actively with headquarters in the dialogue on policy issues. In the view of her delegation, the lessons learned in the field should have a significant influence on the Fund's future plans, and that would be possible only when headquarters and the field cooperated as equal partners.

69. There was also a tendency to increase headquarters personnel. However, in deciding whether or not to establish a post at headquarters, the Fund should consider whether the duties related to that post could be performed at a field location. One of the major functions of UNICEF field staff was to contribute to capacity-building. For developing countries, there was a clear benefit in having as many functions as possible performed at the field level.

70. Agenda 21, recently adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, did not place the necessary emphasis on the highly important issue of population. Reduced population growth was a prerequisite for sustainable development in many parts of the world, and also for the increased well-being of mothers and children. As an organization that dealt with problems of mothers and children, UNICEF must give family planning and population issues a proper place in its activities. In that regard, her delegation was pleased with the report on collaborative programming activities of UNICEF and UNFPA (E/ICEF/1992/L.13).

71. The Earth Summit had had one negative, albeit unintentional, effect on the current session of the Executive Board: the late arrival of documentation. It was essential that the Board should have sufficient time to consider country programme documents. However, it seemed that, at the current session, the Board might have so little time that it would have to rubber-stamp the country programmes.

(Ms. Poulsen, Denmark)

72. Her delegation was pleased that UNICEF continued to accord priority to the least developed countries, most of which were in Africa. While UNICEF expected to increase resources for Africa through supplementary funding, it should be borne in mind that two thirds of the required resources would have to be invested by the developing countries themselves.

73. Her Government fully recognized the importance of supporting the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their difficult period of transition. However, it was important that such needs did not result in a shift in the Fund's established priorities. UNICEF assistance must continue to focus on the poorest segments of society in developing countries, where child mortality was highest.

74. Denmark had made significant but separate allocations to assist the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Those funds were in addition to the Danish development assistance budget, which in 1992 would reach 1 per cent of Denmark's gross national product.

75. Her delegation welcomed the important restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat that had been undertaken by the new Secretary-General. The Nordic countries had actively participated in the discussions on reform, and in 1991 had submitted the Nordic United Nations Project, which included recommendations for changes in the governance and financing of the major United Nations funds and programmes. The purpose of such changes was to ensure the better use of available resources through an improved division of labour within the system - based on the comparative advantage of each programme - and a more secure and predictable financing system for the benefit of the developing countries. The Nordic United Nations Project would be discussed at the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council, where the Nordic countries would submit concrete proposals on reforms.

76. Mrs. OGATA (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the Fund's support for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was particularly important at a time when UNHCR was facing refugee problems of unprecedented magnitude and complexity.

77. There were currently more than 17 million refugees around the world. Every day, more than 10,000 people were being forced to flee their homes. On the other hand, with the help of UNHCR, every day more than 5,000 refugees were returning home to South Africa, Cambodia and Afghanistan. While UNHCR hoped that refugees would soon be returning home to Angola, Eritrea and other parts of Africa, it was keenly aware of the possibility of new refugee flows elsewhere in the world.

78. Such uncertainties, as well as emergency situations, highlighted the importance of close cooperation among United Nations agencies, particularly UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR, which operated in the field. In particular, UNICEF and UNHCR shared a common concern for the

(Mrs. Ogata)

welfare of children and mothers. About 80 per cent of the refugees under the care of UNHCR were women and children, and UNHCR deeply appreciated the contribution that UNICEF made to their welfare. She hoped that UNICEF would become the automatic supplier of safe drinking water to refugees, just as WFP was the automatic supplier of food.

79. UNHCR was particularly concerned with the issue of refugee children, and she had appointed a coordinator to help increase awareness of the special needs of refugee children and to develop an appropriate policy framework and guidelines for action. In particular, greater emphasis should be placed on developing educational opportunities so that refugee children were prepared to face the future when they returned home. She hoped that the coordinator on refugee children would serve as the focal point for cooperation with UNICEF.

80. Over the past four decades, the activities of UNHCR and UNICEF had been drawing the two organizations closer together in their work. While UNICEF had started as an emergency organization but had become increasingly involved in development activities and, recently, the protection of the rights of the child, UNHCR had been founded as an agency for the protection of the rights of refugees, but had soon found itself obliged to respond to emergencies.

81. In the wake of the cold war, the world was faced with emergencies on an unprecedented scale. A little over a year ago, emergencies in the Persian Gulf region and the Horn of Africa had brought together Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in a common effort to forge a well-coordinated international emergency response system. As a result, UNHCR had strengthened its internal emergency preparedness and response capacity by building up five UNHCR emergency teams, stockpiling relief goods and entering into agreements with several government disaster forces and non-governmental personnel. At the same time, UNHCR had strengthened its cooperation with UNICEF and WFP in order to ensure more effective and efficient coordination of operations as well as appeals for funds.

82. In what had formerly been known as Yugoslavia, UNHCR and UNICEF had joined together with WHO, as a complement to the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to provide relief assistance to 1.5 million refugees and displaced persons in the largest refugee crisis that Europe had faced since the end of the Second World War. The two agencies were also working closely together in the Horn of Africa.

83. Response to emergencies must be rapid yet commensurate with the specific needs of each situation. UNICEF had been a pioneer in devising means of ensuring access to victims through corridors of peace or zones of tranquillity. However, both UNHCR and UNICEF were increasingly operating in situations where effective central power did not extend to all regions of the country, as in Yugoslavia and the Horn of Africa. In such situations, consent for passage of relief convoys from local militias or warlords was essential.

(Mrs. Ogata)

It was therefore important to devise new and pragmatic means of reaching those in need of help, especially women and children.

84. One of the more recent phenomena that affected adequate response to emergencies was the introduction of sanctions. While sanctions were an important weapon in the post cold war period, they could also be a double-edged sword, since they could be detrimental to the provision of humanitarian assistance. Unless such sanctions clearly permitted the delivery of food and medicines to those in need, they would punish those who were already the weakest, particularly women and children. Moreover, by worsening a country's economic and material base, sanctions might increase tension and instability, causing new flows of refugees into neighbouring countries.

85. Humanitarian emergencies and returnee operations increasingly took place in areas of conflict. In such situations, special measures were needed not only for the protection of the victims of the conflict, but also for the protection of the staff of humanitarian organizations. In recent months, both UNICEF and UNHCR personnel had lost their lives in the performance of their duties, and it was important to bear in mind that the life of a staff member was just as precious as that of a refugee.

86. There was a need to link emergency and development in situations in which an emergency had been overcome and the primary need was to bridge the gap between relief and development. A current example was northern Iraq, where UNHCR had met the emergency requirements of the population and was phasing out its assistance in order to enable organizations involved in ongoing development assistance, such as UNICEF, to play a greater role. That issue was particularly critical in the context of the voluntary repatriation of refugees. While there were increasing opportunities for refugees to return home, most of the countries to which they were returning had been devastated by many years of conflict and would require comprehensive national rehabilitation and construction programmes. The international community's current efforts to strengthen the response to humanitarian emergencies would be just a temporary palliative if parallel efforts were not made to encourage and pursue development opportunities. Returning refugees must be made a part of that development. Greater inter-agency cooperation and coordination would help relief and development agencies to coordinate their efforts, and UNHCR looked to UNICEF, with its experience in both emergency work and development activities, to play an important role in that area.

87. UNHCR greatly valued inter-agency cooperation in its difficult task of protecting and assisting refugees. In particular, she welcomed the recent establishment of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Emergencies, which should help reinforce the already existing close relationship that UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR had developed in the course of many difficult and complex emergencies. Such inter-agency cooperation should be broadened to include other agencies.

88. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director) said that UNHCR was one of the most important organizations of the United Nations system and it had responded remarkably to the emergency situations that had arisen in many parts of the world.

89. Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) said that her delegation welcomed the Executive Director's comments on the reforms taking place in the United Nations, the Fund's commitment to work with other agencies through such initiatives as the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education, the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy, and its increased cooperation with UNFPA and WHO in undertaking a global approach to AIDS programming. That would lead to improved communication, administration and effectiveness within the United Nations as a whole.

90. While such coordination initiatives were commendable, UNICEF should focus greater attention on working with Governments, other United Nations agencies and the United Nations Secretariat in order to introduce structural changes in the United Nations development system. Basic reforms were an absolute necessity if the United Nations was to maintain its relevance in the development field. Such reforms should be of the type recommended in the Nordic United Nations Project and should lead to more effective and transparent governance and policy-setting at both the system and agency levels. UNICEF must seek to retain its comparative advantages while recognizing that it could accomplish much more as part of a larger, more integrated and better-governed United Nations, at both the local and global levels.

91. Her delegation thanked UNICEF for its full cooperation during the ongoing institutional evaluation being conducted by Canada, Australia, Denmark and Switzerland. The evaluation was reviewing the Fund's programme strategies, management and cooperation with other United Nations development agencies, as well as development agencies outside the United Nations. The evaluation would include in-depth country and regional analyses at the field level, as well as sectoral and thematic analyses of such key areas as women in development; health, water and sanitation; and emergencies. The evaluation would provide a clearer understanding of the Fund's role and position in a rapidly changing world. The results of the evaluation should enable the members of the Executive Board to make constructive recommendations on ways to improve the Fund's programme and administration. The evaluation might also encourage the Board to demonstrate more effective governance and improve the quality of its policy advice to UNICEF.

92. While technical assistance would be helpful to all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as they restructured their economies, her delegation considered that UNICEF, with its special mandate for women and children, should focus primary attention on the poorest, least developed countries of that region and on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and women in those countries. The Fund should also work closely with other United Nations development agencies active in the region, using unified United Nations offices as its base of operations.

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

93. One of the Fund's major achievements over the past year had been the work undertaken by the secretariat and the Reference Group in preparing technical recommendations for presentational improvements in various budget formats. The recommendations of the Reference Group and the secretariat would result in the production of a single global programme budget document that would contain clear and transparent information on the financial and staffing implications of all decisions taken by the Board on global funds submissions. While her delegation fully endorsed those technical recommendations, it considered that the entire question of global funds required further examination from a policy perspective. The strength of the Fund's operations had always been in its field delivery. In order to maintain that comparative advantage and develop it further, UNICEF should ensure that its operations continued to be driven primarily by its country programmes. For that reason, her delegation favoured both the consolidation of such funds and their overall reduction.

94. Her delegation was not convinced that changes in priorities during the implementation of country programmes should be resolved through the use of global funds. An alternative might be simply to revise country programme allocations as soon as new priorities emerged. In any event, field offices should be encouraged, from the outset of the programming process, to select themes that were most relevant for the host country and to incorporate them into their respective country programmes.

95. Canada had the political will to implement the commitment to the World Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children. It had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in December 1991. In May 1992, it had launched an action plan entitled "Brighter Futures", which focused priority on children at risk. At that time, Canada had announced a $500 million child-development initiative, which included a $20 million partnership for a children's fund for Canadian non-governmental organizations working internationally. That international fund was completely additional to Canada's aid budget. While the economic situation was difficult all over the world, all countries must continue to show their long-term commitment, both domestically and internationally, by providing real additional financing to the cause of the most vulnerable children of the world.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

1992 regular session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 15 June 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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General debate (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Ms. M. A. Cuna, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. RIBEIRO (Brazil) said that the events of the past few years had vastly altered the international scenario, creating new needs within UNICEF's area of activity. However, continued priority had to be given to developing countries because deeper structural imbalances in the international economic order limited their ability to overcome underdevelopment and poverty.

2. With regard to the 10 specific proposals listed in the report of the Executive Director, one called for demilitarization in the developing world: however, military spending in a number of developing countries was already at very low levels; in Brazil it was less than 1 per cent of GDP, and yet Brazil still had inadequate resources to meet social priorities. The emphasis should be placed instead on shifting resources from those countries which had traditionally accounted for the lion's share of global military expenditure to international cooperation in the economic and social fields.

3. Another proposal, regarding international action on debt, aid and trade, would create a new framework that would allow the economic reforms that were under way in the developing countries to provide better living conditions for the people and allow the promises made during the World Summit for Children to become realities.

4. UNICEF must concentrate on reaching the goals of the World Summit for Children. Millions of children world wide were unable to satisfy even their most basic needs, and their opportunities for social and economic development were therefore severely limited. The Board must establish priorities so that the determination shown by world leaders during the Summit could be translated into practical action.

5. His Government had undertaken a number of initiatives, including national child vaccination campaigns, the inclusion of the major provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Constitution, and the establishment of a Ministry of the Child. A draft national programme of action had been submitted to UNICEF and a coalition comprising the executive and legislative branches, political parties, entrepreneurial and labour federations and the National Movement of Street Children had been established to implement the strategy outlined in it. Furthermore, 5,000 children's centres were to be constructed by the end of 1994 providing for the educational and health needs of 6.5 million children.

6. The structural adjustment programmes under way in developing countries were having a great impact on vulnerable social groups; paths to development must be found in which children were a central concern. The Rio Declaration, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, called for a concept of sustainable development in which the future of children must be a priority.

(Mr. Ribeiro, Brazil)

7. Brazil had participated in the Budget Format Reference Group, which had helped stimulate a process of dialogue between the Secretariat and some members of the Board; that exercise should be regarded as exceptional in nature. His delegation fully endorsed the Executive Director's recommendations to continue negotiations on all fronts and to prepare a study of the non-financial implications of a move from the current New York headquarters. It was to be hoped that the spirit of compromise seen in informal pre-Board consultations would make it possible to reach a decision on the question of the rotation of the Chairmanship of the Board.

8. Mrs. NDIAYE (Senegal) said that the problems of the most vulnerable social categories lay at the heart of Senegal's development strategies; mothers and above all children were central to Senegal's future. Senegal was characterized by rapid demographic growth; a reduced but still high rate of infant and child mortality; a precarious child health situation, despite the success of the expanded programme on immunization, which needed to be evaluated and reoriented; a school attendance rate which still fell short of the objective for the decade; an economic situation affected by drought, indebtedness and the constraints of structural adjustment programmes; and growing urbanization, with a high rate of migration to the capital, Dakar. In that situation, her Government had developed an institutional framework to ensure maximum efficiency for national projects and for programmes implemented with bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

9. Senegal's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child expanded the legal framework already in existence in the Senegalese family code. A long tradition of stable political democracy had made possible the implementation of the programme of cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Senegal for the period 1987-1991. The programme sought to alleviate women's work; provide training for women through functional literacy; and bring about their empowerment in economic and health matters. The evaluation of the programme had shown that not only macroeconomic aspects, but also the specific conditions of women and children, needed to be taken into account.

10. In support of the new programme of cooperation with UNICEF, her Government had expanded decentralization, affording regions unprecedented autonomy, so as to help the regional bodies monitor ongoing programmes and implement new activities as and when local needs were identified. Non-governmental organizations had defined the institutional framework of their activities with ministerial departments. A national family planning programme was being implemented. Those activities constituted the basis of the national plan of action for children which was being implemented at a cost of about 67 billion francs CFA.

11. Senegal's national plan of action for children aimed to halve the rate of malnutrition among children under 5; provide drinking water and sewage systems

(Mrs. Ndiaye, Senegal)

for all; and ensure that at least 80 per cent of schoolchildren completed primary education, all by the year 2000. To that end, resources had been reallocated to sectors concerned with children; all ministerial departments involved in the plan had sectoral programmes for children within their global programmes; public health programmes were being brought in line with WHO recommendations; and resources made available by the alleviation of debt-servicing were being reallocated to projects for the advancement of the most vulnerable groups.

12. The costs of national plans far exceeded national possibilities; Senegal believed deeply in the need for international action to alleviate or even write off African debt. Much was expected from the International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, at which donor countries would be able to demonstrate their commitment to African children in real and concrete terms, and African countries would be able to submit projects for financing and conduct negotiations.

13. Mr. BLACK (National Committees for UNICEF) said that the National Committees played a vital role within UNICEF and, in the industrialized countries, were the primary link to the public. An emerging role in advocacy brought the National Committees into a broader area of partnership which had already yielded results in some countries in activities in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, preparation of the National Programmes of Action in follow-up to the World Summit for Children, and in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. That expanding role came at a time of growing difficulties for National Committees; the economic recession in many countries had made fund-raising efforts more challenging, and development priorities were shifting. In 1991 National Committees had none the less contributed 20 per cent of UNICEF's overall budget, and they continued to be in the forefront of private sector fund-raising that extended UNICEF programme activities throughout the developing world.

14. With respect to UNICEF's role in the context of the United Nations system, both in emergencies and in ongoing programme activities, he noted that coordination had not always proven to be effective in practice. UNICEF was a flexible organization which achieved results; it would be regrettable if it were held back by unnecessary bureaucratic requirements. UNICEF's efficiency reflected well on the whole United Nations system and should be encouraged. At the same time, the National Committees were encouraged that there was finally a definitive statement on population issues in the joint paper by UNFPA and UNICEF; they would welcome a stronger role for UNICEF in its collaboration with WHO on the issue of AIDS, and they believed that UNICEF should play a strong role on environmental issues.

15. The National Committees appreciated enhanced cooperation with the Secretariat, including their participation in discussions of the external relations component of the medium-term plan for 1992-1995. The policy paper on education for development was of great importance; it built on educational

(Mr. Black)

work carried out by the National Committees over the past two decades and outlined the shift from education about the problems of developing countries to a broader, more comprehensive concept of education for global citizenship.

16. UNICEF had a stronger role to play in responding to the needs of children caught in armed conflict. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the practice of using children as soldiers must be ended and UNICEF and the Executive Board must find ways of providing psychological help to child soldiers and to all children who had experienced armed conflict.

17. Much more assistance was needed to aid children in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Central and Eastern Europe. However, children in those countries must be helped with additional money, not money that would otherwise have gone to countries previously classified as developing countries. The National Committees therefore endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Director in document E/ICEF/1992/L.14. Countries of the region that qualified for UNICEF aid on the basis of existing criteria should be assisted through supplementary funding, and non-qualifying countries should be assisted on an exceptional basis. The National Committees, at their annual meeting in May 1992, had decided to systematize their collective technical assistance to national committees in Central and Eastern Europe during the transition in those countries.

18. The National Committees were encouraged that a significant proportion of UNICEF's resources were being used in Africa, and that many posts in Africa had been upgraded. The International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children would be a critical opportunity to organize an international strategy for the future of Africa. Considering the myriad economic, environmental, health and political problems facing the people of sub-Saharan Africa, a galvanizing of efforts around national programmes of action by Africans themselves and by the international donor community was the best hope for the future. Governments must mount an effective effort while the opportunity was still there. The annual celebration of the Day of the African Child was an excellent way of drawing attention to the plight of children in Africa.

19. Mr. TREPCZYNSKI (Poland) said that, in implementing the decisions of the World Summit for Children and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for the first time in history responsibility for children was being shouldered jointly by Governments and international organizations, central and local administration, political and non-governmental organizations and the mass media.

20. In Poland, economic problems were the main obstacles to full implementation of the resolutions of the World Summit and to the elaboration of the National Plan of Action and implementation of all provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the situation of a substantial number of children was

(Mr. Trepczynski, Poland)

deteriorating, for the State health care systems were disappearing, and the social services that provided the safety nets in industrial countries had not as yet been established. Children's educational and health facilities were being closed down. Under those circumstances, UNICEF should play a more active role in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States and provide support for the, as yet, weak governmental and social structures. The activities of UNICEF in implementing decisions 1990/5 and 1991/20 were encouraging, although the secretariat had not tapped the entire potential for action made available to it under those resolutions, and part of the funds could have been used in a more rational way. UNICEF's support to the countries of the region should be based on additional funding so as not to draw on the funds allocated to developing nations. The multiple new tasks which the UNICEF secretariat was facing in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe fully justified a reinforcement of the staff of the UNICEF office in Geneva.

21. UNICEF's breastfeeding campaign had met with widespread support in Poland's medical community and public opinion. A National Committee for Breastfeeding Promotion had launched many activities and had undertaken to organize about 30 baby-friendly hospitals by the end of 1992.

22. His delegation regarded comprehensive action for the benefit of African countries as indispensable and urgent. It supported the advocacy and social mobilization UNICEF was carrying out on many fronts; an active role of external relations was imperative in order to strengthen UNICEF's presence and efficiency. His delegation particularly supported the work of the Divisions of Public Affairs and Information. It accepted the Executive Director's recommendation for a review of administrative and management structures at UNICEF headquarters. It welcomed the work of the Reference Group in contributing to the clarity and transparency of the UNICEF budget. It noted the positive contribution UNICEF was making towards strengthening the role and operational functions of the United Nations system.

23. Mr. OSVALD (Observer for Sweden) said that reform and improvement of the systems for development were crucial to the cause of children. The Nordic countries had submitted the results of a study of the United Nations in the economic and social field as their contribution to the debate, and the United Nations system itself had examined the issues and had submitted some important and far-reaching proposals. The next step in the process was the high-level discussion by the Economic and Social Council at its forthcoming session, based on the report of the Secretary-General on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields (A/46/578). The issues would be brought before the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, as well.

24. In the view of his Government, reform meant strengthening the United Nations, not simply reducing costs. It would like to forge strong multilateral institutions with a high degree of integrity, and would like to

(Mr. Osvald, Observer, Sweden)

see a strong management capable of dealing with member countries through well-defined and transparent procedures. Such a multilateral system would be partners rather than clients, and membership would entail both rights and obligations. Governing bodies should engage in more discussion of policy and strategy and much less micro-management. A system of governance combining universality and efficiency and a predictable and sustainable funding system were also needed.

25. The unique role of UNICEF was to care for the world's main resource - its children. The goals for the 1990s were an important tool, and the Declaration of the World Summit for Children represented the political will to deal with those issues. His Government had endeavoured to fulfil its political commitment by increasing its support to UNICEF and to other children's programmes.

26. The Executive Board would consider National Plans of Action later in its current session. His delegation shared the concern about available resources for specific requirements, and emphasized the need for national budgets to reflect the commitments made in the Declaration. It was encouraging to see that developing countries themselves were incorporating capacity-building into National Plans of Action by offering suggestions on monitoring of new systems and strengthening of existing projects at the community level.

27. The General Assembly resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance (A/RES/46/182) and the subsequent appointment of a high-level emergency relief coordinator had established the Organization's central role in the field of humanitarian assistance. Within its mandate, UNICEF continued to have an operational role in emergencies. That resolution had also emphasized the link between emergency assistance and long-term development, and finding ways to link activities in both fields was a new and important challenge to UNICEF. More and more emergencies were man-made, and dealing with children forced into active participation in war was another major challenge.

28. Africa continued to require special attention. The important role of women in development, investment in women and the girl-child, as well as education and family planning, were some important areas for action.

29. His Government would continue its support for the cause of the children of the world and the work of UNICEF. In order to shape a peaceful future, the well-being of children must remain high on the international agenda.

30. Baroness CHALKER of WALLASEY (United Kingdom) said that her delegation welcomed the Executive Director's practical approach to reform of the United Nations development system, which would make a constructive and positive contribution to the debate. Those ideas, along with the commitment to reform also expressed by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the May Governing Council session, should contribute to

(Baroness Chalker of Wallasey,
United Kingdom)

the discussion of reform at the forthcoming Economic and Social Council session. The opportunity to reinvigorate the system to meet the challenges of the current decade and beyond must not be lost. With regard to UNICEF in particular, the restructuring of its working methods agreed at the March meeting of the Executive Board was encouraging. It was vital to retain members' confidence in the budget process, and the review of the budget format should produce greater clarity in presentation of its financial management. The Executive Board should avoid the temptation of micro-management, bearing in mind that the goal of reform was maintaining and improving programme quality.

31. Turning to the subject of emergencies, her delegation commended the disaster management training plan initiative managed by UNDP and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a fundamental training package for developing countries in which their own managers could be assisted by United Nations and donor Government field staff. All UNICEF staff should be encouraged to participate. The United Kingdom had a continuing interest in the operations of the newly established Department of Humanitarian Affairs and its interaction with agencies such as UNICEF, and it intended to allocate its humanitarian aid funding where that aid would be used most effectively. Based on the report on emergency operations in 1991 and the positive relations between UNICEF and the new Department, the United Kingdom would be more involved in supporting UNICEF emergency actions in 1992.

32. The speed with which UNICEF, in cooperation with UNFPA and WHO, had responded to the pressing needs of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had been impressive, and the level of collaboration had been exemplary. As to future policies for the region, UNICEF should concentrate primarily on support for programme action, using supplementary funds to meet the particular needs of vulnerable communities. In addition, UNICEF must work with the rest of the United Nations system to act as a clearinghouse for information on needs and assistance. It must also pay greater attention to the plight of women in the former Soviet Union, who lacked access to reliable contraception, and adequate facilities in gynaecological and maternity units. The health of women deserved at least as much attention as that of their children.

33. The drought in southern Africa was another critical issue. Her delegation supported the refocusing of UNICEF country programmes in order to tackle the emergency conditions in the region. While drought alleviation measures were clearly designed to respond to the current crisis, they must also assist the long-term development process, balancing emergency assistance with programmes for sustainable development. The United Kingdom also supported UNICEF's proposals for South Africa.

34. As a follow-up to the World Summit for Children, the National Plans of Action should play a role in informing both the future work of UNICEF and the

(Baroness Chalker of Wallasey, United Kingdom)

policies and aspirations of developing countries. The United Kingdom would continue to focus its assistance on the needs of those at greatest risk: mothers and children. It could offer assistance in new fields, including family planning, but, ultimately, developing countries must decide their own priorities. Her Government remained committed to the Declaration of the World Summit for Children, and, in practical partnership with developing countries, would advance the objectives set forth therein.

35. Mr. SHIN (Republic of Korea), commenting on specific areas of UNICEF's activity, said that the key role of women in attaining child survival and development (CSD) goals could not be overemphasized. The involvement of mothers had been crucial to the achievement of universal child immunization (UCI), and their participation would be essential for the programmes of the 1990s. New ways must be found to ensure that women became genuinely involved in the decision-making process also. It should be noted that evaluation procedures, which previously had concentrated on women as beneficiaries, currently stressed their active involvement in sectoral programmes. Further efforts should be made to collect gender-disaggregated data and to develop socio-economic indicators on women. Men must become involved in promoting the participation of women, as well. The issue of under-investment in the education of the girl-child must be addressed fully.

36. Although the AIDS pandemic was receiving increasing attention, its full impact was likely to surpass even the most pessimistic forecasts. Coordination between UNICEF and WHO was crucial in order to avoid overlapping mandates. UNICEF should continue to improve measurement capabilities and to promote a more systematic approach to the exchange of information on AIDS.

37. The Bamako Initiative provided a strong foundation on which sustainable health care could be developed, but several issues must be addressed before communities could be expected to provide adequate financial and management support for their health care. Consideration must be given to the current economic plight of many developing countries and the need for gradual strengthening of both financial and management capability. Decentralization of decision-making was a necessary first step towards increased community involvement. The next step should be the promotion of two-way decision-making so that primary health care services could appeal to communities both able and willing to pay for them. The use of "coverage curves" appeared to be an effective way to assess the needs of individual communities and to adapt primary health care (PHC) services accordingly.

38. Since sustainability was a primary goal of the Bamako Initiative, the question of how to finance future drug supply imports must be resolved. Accordingly, greater attention should be given to efforts to develop sustainable self-financing schemes. The lessons to be learned through efforts to restore pharmaceutical production capability in the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union would be useful in that connection.

(Mr. Shin, Republic of Korea)

39. National leadership was one common ingredient essential to success. UNICEF had clearly demonstrated its capability in the area of advocacy, but Governments had the duty to formulate and implement the necessary policies. The results of close cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of the Republic of Korea had been impressive. Its cooperation had progressed from an emergency phase through a child survival phase, and finally to a child development phase, culminating in its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Growing interest among the Korean people in UNICEF activities had resulted in funding from non-governmental groups. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its full participation in efforts to achieve the goals of UNICEF.

40. Mr. MENEN (India) said that the period since 1989 had seen the emergence of a growing commitment to the reorientation of global priorities in order to improve the quality of life of millions of poor and needy people, especially in the developing world. One of the most visible manifestations of that process had been the global mobilization of efforts towards the preparation of national plans of action. In his own country the draft National Programme of Action had already been finalized. The Programme had involved the participation of various Governmment ministries and departments and discussions with leading voluntary organizations working in India. India was also taking active steps to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and was engaged in a regional effort to develop a Plan of Action for all the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It was his delegation's conviction that such regional efforts would strengthen UNICEF's global efforts to develop a consensus for action in that field.

41. During the past year, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) had continued to be the bedrock of India's child development efforts, which had been accorded international recognition in 1991. The ICDS experience, by virtue of its comprehensive scope, mirrored some of the most crucial issues relevant to current development planning and highlighted the need for community participation. There was now a major shift of emphasis in programme design towards the mobilization of beneficiaries in order to ensure their actual participation in development programmes. In terms of programme content, the ICDS had been used to extend a package of services to school dropouts and unmarried adolescent girls from poor families, with the aim of improving their nutrition and health and enhancing their literacy and skills. The aim was to present an alternative to early marriage and early motherhood.

42. If the desired goals for children were to be attained, however, it would ultimately be necessary to achieve a radical change in the status of women. That could only come about if women themselves were able to establish their own democratic institutions. Accordingly, in the past year the Government of India had established a National Commission for Women, which would monitor the implementation of legislation for the protection of women's rights and consider possible amendments. It had also set in motion a gender-awareness

(Mr. Menen, India)

campaign aimed at planners, policy makers and administrators. However, if the obstacles to programmes for women and children were to be removed, it was not enough merely to allocate resources and create bureaucratic structures or to try to change society's attitudes towards women through persuasion: women must have greater access to education, training and opportunities for earning a living. Various income-generation schemes for women were currently being reviewed as part of a comprehensive approach to the status of women.

43. In the context of such an integrated approach, his delegation welcomed the fact that UNICEF had specifically included family planning in the agenda for discussion. His delegation had requested such a discussion at successive sessions of the Executive Board, but it noted that the Executive Director's report on family planning tended to restrict UNICEF's commitment in that field. The overwhelming reality of a burgeoning population, which perpetuated poverty and threatened the very survival of the environment, underscored the need for direct intervention to promote family planning. However, family planning efforts could succeed only if women's perceptions of such programmes were radically changed, particularly in the developing countries - a change which could only come about within the framework of an organic integration of mother and child care, safe motherhood and immunization programmes with the family planning component. UNICEF should take up innovative schemes based on such an integrative approach and act as a catalyst for action in developing countries.

44. No amount of health care intervention could, however, have an impact on the fundamental problems of the poorest sections of the population unless the scourge of malnutrition was removed. While the ICDS programme was the mainstay of direct intervention to remove malnutrition among children and mothers, it was recognized that nutrition was a multi-dimensional problem which had a symbiotic relationship with development. India was therefore finalizing a National Nutrition Policy and was proposing a number of administrative arrangements which would ensure that nutritional considerations were duly taken into account in government policy instruments. It had also introduced in Parliament the Infant Milk Substitute and Infant Food Bill, which attempted to regulate the production, supply and distribution of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles and weaning foods. In that connection, his delegation welcomed UNICEF's baby-friendly hospital initiative, and also its recent initiative aimed at building a world consensus on ending micro-nutrient deficiencies. The Fund should follow it up by augmenting country programme resources for prophylaxis and food-fortification programmes.

45. His delegation had noted with concern the reduction in expenditure on education in the period 1990-1991. Education was one field where dramatic results could be achieved even without an overall transformation of economic status: indeed it could itself trigger such a transformation. UNICEF and UNESCO must, therefore, prepare a plan of action similar to the Plan of Action of the Summit for Children, through an international consensus, and support community initiatives to prepare 10-year programmes of action with quantified targets.

(Mr. Menen, India)

46. India too was concerned at the failure of safety nets in large parts of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. However, in view of the size of the problem and its unique nature and context, funding for those countries should be financed entirely out of special supplementary resources. There should be no depletion of UNICEF resources allocated for the country programmes of the developing countries.

47. His delegation endorsed UNICEF's efforts to emphasize the close links between environmental concerns and child survival and development, education, sanitation and water supply and nutrition programmes. At the same time, attention must be focused on the long-term financial sustainability of maternal and child health, particularly in the context of the structural adjustment programmes currently under way in most of the developing countries. Spending in the social sector was one of the earliest casualties, and large parts of Africa might soon be in a situation far more desperate than that facing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Accordingly, public opinion in the developed countries must be mobilized, and a special structural adjustment fund established to address the problems of the neediest.

48. In conclusion, his delegation noted with interest the attention being paid in UNICEF to the need for better administration and coordination of operational activities. While it was undeniable that finite resources should be properly allocated and managed, it was important to guard against any reform that resulted in, or even gave the impression of, excluding many countries from the decision-making process or of concentrating that process in the hands of a few.

49. Mr. DE MARCHANT ET D'ANSEMBOURG (Netherlands) said that, while his delegation fully supported the Executive Director's proposals, it did have some doubts concerning the direct links between some of the proposals and UNICEF's mandate, and indeed between the proposals and the rest of the Executive Director's report. In that context, he stressed the importance of setting priorities and urged UNICEF to refrain from taking on too many new issues and engaging in initiatives in areas that might be better dealt with by other agencies. The importance of priority-setting also held true for activities that did fall within UNICEF's mandate.

50. The Netherlands was fully committed to the principle of a "first call for children", enunciated in the Executive Director's second proposal. His country's Minister for Development and Cooperation had recently decided that, starting in 1993, a separate budget item would be reserved for the benefit of children in especially difficult circumstances.

51. Referring to the National Programmes of Action, his delegation took the view that both the report of the Executive Director and the progress report on the follow-up to the World Summit presented interesting, and at some points far-reaching, ideas on the subject. Further clarification and discussion of previous and current UNICEF activities would be needed in order to determine the Fund's future tasks and activities in that area.

(Mr. De Marchant et D'Ansembourg, Netherlands)

52. His delegation welcomed the forthcoming International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, to be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 25 to 27 November 1992 and would revert to the topic at a later stage.

53. Discussion on UNICEF's role in the preparation of National Programmes of Action and in the organization of regional conferences must always be viewed in the context of the need to find the right balance between the Fund's field-oriented work and social mobilization activities on the one hand, and the follow-up to the World Summit for Children on the other.

54. His delegation also attached great value to UNICEF's emergency assistance. While recognizing the comparative advantage enjoyed by UNICEF in certain aspects of emergency operations, his delegation believed that the Fund should always be aware of its own responsibilities, and that emergency assistance should not distract UNICEF from its mainstream activities. With that in mind, he expressed some hesitation about the proposed recovery rate of 6 per cent, which resulted from the relative increase in emergency activities. At the same time, further information on the real costs and on the application of an "emergency" recovery rate by other United Nations agencies would contribute to fruitful discussion at the current session of the Board.

55. Given the difficulties arising in the Eastern European countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNICEF must make sure that resources were not made available to countries unless they qualified according to objective standards. For the same reason, it must be efficient with its resources in terms of money and staff, and there must be coordination from the very beginning within the United Nations and among all international agencies involved.

56. Noting that at the previous session of the Executive Board, the need for transparent and user-friendly budget documents had been emphasized, he welcomed the results achieved by the Reference Group established to that end and the subsequent recommendations made by the Executive Director.

57. His delegation had taken note of the suggestions and proposals of the Executive Director in respect of the administration of UNICEF. Although it had not yet studied those ideas in detail, it shared the view of the Executive Director that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly were more appropriate forums in which to discuss such reforms. It took the view that proposals such as the enlargement of the Bureau should be discussed in the light of the outcome of the general discussions of the Nordic United Nations project.

58. Mr. CORNAZ (Switzerland) said that two basic concerns should be paramount in UNICEF's operational principles, namely, reinforcement of national capabilities and the need for a comprehensive or holistic approach.

59. With regard to the former, it was now generally recognized that each country must be able to take responsibility for its own development, defining the policies it wished to follow and implementing the programmes for which it had opted. Unfortunately, developing countries did not necessarily have such a capability; moreover, creating such capabilities required time and, above all, firm resolve. The need to strengthen national capabilities was especially relevant to UNICEF, because of its operational nature and because it maintained cooperative links with the various ministries in the country concerned, and often with non-governmental organizations. In addition, UNICEF operated in fields for which national institutional capacities were often relatively weak, such as health or community development.

60. All UNICEF programmes should make explicit provision for the measures needed to create and strengthen national capabilities, and all evaluations should assess the progress made in that direction and the results obtained.

61. With regard to the comprehensive or holistic approach, he said that there was a growing awareness that there could be no hope of promoting better development for children - and particularly for children who were at greatest risk - unless all the factors involved were considered and unless the interdependence of the economy, health, environment, culture, legislation and social structures were taken into account. The Summit for Children, and still more so the Earth Summit being held in Rio de Janeiro, clearly showed the need for such an approach. UNICEF was especially well-placed to encourage that comprehensive approach in the relevant countries, in cooperation with the other development agencies. Such an approach must not neglect the need to set priorities, thus guaranteeing greater sustainability for projects and action programmes within the context of a genuine development strategy.

62. Mr. PEREZ-INFANTE (Spain) congratulated UNICEF on the truly praiseworthy work it had done during the past year mentioning, in particular, the studies and publications of the International Centre for the Development of the Child; UNICEF's efforts and cooperation activities to promote women's full participation in development programmes; and its work in the Ibero-American region together with regional bodies and arrangements such as SAFLAC.

63. In Spain, UNICEF was highly regarded. For the past several years the Government had been endeavouring to increase Spain's contribution to UNICEF, which currently amounted to almost US$ 3 million, and it would continue to do so. At the local level, the Assembly of the Spanish Federation of Towns and Provinces had agreed to accede to the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children.

(Mr. Perez-Infante, Spain)

64. In compliance with the undertaking it had assumed at the World Summit for Children, the Government had drawn up a plan of action relating to the child, which would be officially communicated to UNICEF during the current year. Other measures included action in the legislative and educational spheres, including new legislation dealing with the education system in general and with the conditions and syllabus for children under six years of age. In addition, a new organic law had just been approved to regulate the competence and procedure of juvenile courts. Another current objective was to embody the rights of the child in a single legal text. There was also a plan to promote health and hygiene at school-level.

65. The scope of social services was likewise being expanded by means of a concerted scheme for the provision of basic social services throughout the country's autonomous regions. Campaigns were being launched to promote public awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child throughout Spain, and the Ministry of Social Affairs was sponsoring various studies and publications relating to children's problems and needs. Vocational training was also available in respect of all tasks related to children. The authorities were determined that promoting the well-being of the family and children should be a central concern in all spheres of government activity. The authorities were also active in international cooperation in that field; for historical and traditional reasons, such action had focused chiefly on Latin America. One example was an international meeting for children to be held in Madrid and Seville, with the participation of Spanish and Latin American children, towards the end of 1992. The Spanish Government continued to hope, however, that Europe would have an instrument of its own in order to promote the rights of the child.

66. He suggested that the Board should consider the possibility of proclaiming a world day for the rights of the child, to be observed each year, possibly on 20 November, the day on which the General Assembly had adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a view to promoting wider awareness of the rights of children and to obtain increased resources.

67. Mr. DOGRAMACI (Observer for Turkey) said that his delegation wholeheartedly supported the observance, the following day, of the Day of the African Child, adding that attention should also be given to the intolerable situation of children in other places, notably Sarajevo and Dubrovnik.

68. Among the most striking developments in the past year had been the promotion of breast-feeding and the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative, which had become an important component of that effort. An international conference to promote breast-feeding had been held in Ankara, 1991, and a campaign to identify baby-friendly hospitals in countries all over the world had been launched. The Conference had adopted a declaration to the effect that all women should be able to breast-feed and that all infants should be fed exclusively on breast milk for at least four months after they were born. The attainment of that goal would require commitment and social mobilization,

(Mr. Dogramaci, Observer, Turkey)

and it had been noted that obstacles to breast-feeding within the health system, the workplace and the community would have to be eliminated. He was pleased to report that Europe's first two hospitals recognized as baby-friendly were located in Turkey, in Ankara and Istanbul, and that a further two had been awarded a certificate of commitment. It was gratifying to see that a large number of countries had taken steps to implement the baby-friendly hospital initiative, and that the programme to train health officials to promote the initiative had been launched, notably in Central and Eastern Europe in partnership with UNICEF, La Leche League and the International Baby Food Action Network. However, since, in developing countries, the great majority of babies were born outside hospital, the scope of the initiative must be expanded to include all types of health care centres, midwives and other trained health workers.

69. His delegation would appreciate an update from the Executive Director on progress made towards ending free and low-cost supplies of infant formula to hospitals and maternity units. He congratulated the Executive Director and the Director-General of WHO for their success in coming to an agreement with the infant formula manufacturers in that connection, and was pleased to report that distribution of free or low-cost infant formula in maternity wards was no longer permitted in Turkey.

70. Another product of collaboration between UNICEF, WHO and the International Paediatric Association (IPA) was the publication International Child Health which had been launched in the second half of 1990 and had since continued to be published on a quarterly basis, with a wide circulation. The January 1992 issue was devoted exclusively to breast-feeding and the baby-friendly hospital initiative.

71. The Government of Turkey had prepared its draft national programme of action in accordance with the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children. The goals of the World Summit were being closely monitored by the Turkish Intersectoral Board for Children.

72. His delegation was pleased to note the progress being made on the children's vaccine initiative. It supported the effort to improve and develop new vaccines for the principal childhood diseases and the establishment of a secretariat and a management committee for the initiative. UNICEF's role in support of national EPI programmes and operations research at the country level was to be commended.

73. Noting UNICEF's increasing activities in connection with AIDS, his delegation urged the Fund to use its expertise to bring about changes in behaviour, attitudes and practices, while encouraging research aimed at developing preventive vaccines. All agencies should be encouraged in their efforts on behalf of AIDS research.

(Mr. Dogramaci, Observer, Turkey)

74. His delegation noted the active participation of UNICEF in the safe motherhood initiative. Efforts to integrate safe motherhood with the child survival effort were bound to have a favourable impact on that area of health, which had been too long neglected.

75. The close collaboration of UNICEF and WHO with non-governmental organizations, notably the International Paediatric Association, had been of the utmost value. Ways of increasing the contribution of paediatricians to the survival of children had been explored at length at the four meetings so far held of the joint IPA/UNICEF/WHO task force, and it had been decided that the focus of that collaboration should be on initiatives at both the country and the regional level. Members of the task force had also expressed particular interest in the plight of children in especially difficult circumstances.

76. On the basis of recommendations emerging from a 1990 seminar in the Dominican Republic, a plan of action for research related to child abuse had been laid down, and efforts were being made to find the necessary funds to carry out the relevant studies.

77. His delegation commended UNICEF, WHO and the other organizations which had participated in the three missions organized by UNICEF to the countries of the former Soviet Union, which had resulted in timely and valuable documentation indicating that new requirements for UNICEF assistance had emerged in those countries in the aftermath of political upheaval. Conditions facing children in some of the recently established States were very similar to those in, for example, Mexico or Brazil. The needs of the Central Asian States merited the involvement of UNICEF in a measured, precisely targeted fashion without, however, diverting funds from developing countries currently supported by UNICEF. He pointed out that his Government was currently providing those countries with a broad range of technical and other assistance.

78. The Executive Director's views on the need to broaden the scope of the Bureau and expand its role were valuable. His delegation believed that the Bureau should meet more regularly and should review issues in greater depth. With regard to the talk about the restructuring of the United Nations, he said that while greater effectiveness and reduced duplication were admirable aims, it was also necessary to preserve the specific strengths and expertise of individual agencies. In particular, UNICEF's remarkable flexibility, and its skill in delivering concrete, measurable results on the ground without delay, should not be impaired.

79. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to see that many countries, developed and developing alike, had formulated national programmes of action pursuant to the World Summit for Children. The Japanese Government had submitted its own national programme of action to UNICEF in January 1992, stating that it would increase its financial contribution to UNICEF to a level

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

commensurate with its economic capacity. It was also taking steps to join the more than 100 countries that had already ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

80. Africa was the area in most need of UNICEF assistance, and in 1991 Africa had received the largest allocation of UNICEF funds - 36 per cent of its resources. The forthcoming OAU Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, in which Japan would participate, would be taking up the question of even more assistance. His delegation supported UNICEF's efforts to strengthen its already active role in tasks such as promoting the Bamako Initiative. He had attended a recent summit meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, hosted by former President Carter of the United States, on guinea-worm disease. Since 1988, Japan had provided some US$ 50 million towards drinking-water projects in Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Benin. He appealed for further efforts in order to eradicate guinea-worm disease by the year 2000.

81. Japan endorsed UNICEF's activities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, including joint action with WHO and other United Nations agencies, which were consistent with its global mandate; however, given the limited resources available and UNICEF's primary task in developing countries, the focus and scale of those activities should be clearly defined and monitored. UNICEF should support national policy formulation and the development analysis. As for programme support activities, the differing economic and social conditions from country to country called for a differentiated approach: countries with low per capita GNP and high mortality rate among under-five-year-olds should qualify for UNICEF assistance. His delegation could in general accept the recommendation that UNICEF should pursue three options: to maintain the present scope and scale of support for policy, analytical and advocacy work throughout the region; to provide programme support for "qualifying" countries from supplementary funds; and to provide programme support for "non-qualifying" countries on an exceptional basis. The proposal about staffing requirements would, however, have to be studied carefully. It was also essential to collaborate closely with other agencies, especially WHO and UNDP. His delegation welcomed UNICEF's action to ensure close collaboration with UNDP, including a common United Nations office should a field presence be required. In that regard, resources should be managed more rationally so as to make more available for work in the field, and a review of UNICEF's headquarters administrative and management structure should be vigorously pursued.

82. In 1991 UNICEF income had come to US$ 807 million, $14 million less than in 1990 and $51 million less than the estimates contained in the 1991 medium-term plan. UNICEF had said that the shortfall was due to the high value of the United States dollar during the year, and that Government contributions in local currencies to general resources were actually higher than anticipated; in any event, the economies of many developed countries were declining or still in recession, while demand for available resources had increased considerably and would probably continue to do so. He therefore

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

hoped that UNICEF would exercise great caution in forecasting its income and intensify its fund-raising efforts accordingly.

83. His delegation welcomed UNICEF's involvement and it looked forward to the report which was to be submitted to the Executive Board, at its 1993 session. UNICEF's request for a 6 per cent surcharge on emergency programmes seemed reasonable, in light of the growing list of emergency operations and the need to avoid cross-subsidization from general resources. As ACABQ pointed out, however, the question whether national committees and NGOs should continue to be exempted from the surcharge should be examined carefully.

84. On the matter of greater clarity concerning the linkage between programme and budgetary matters, the criteria for establishing project and core posts and UNICEF budget documents, his delegation greatly appreciated the hard work done by the Reference Group and the Secretariat. It was ready to make detailed comments on the recommendations before the Board and on the suggestions of the Advisory Committee, in the hope that, in 1993, the budget would be in a much clearer format. His delegation also appreciated UNICEF's detailed report about headquarters accommodation; the second option mentioned appeared realistic on the grounds of geographical advantage and financial savings alike.

85. Mrs. NGOMBA (Observer for Cameroon) said that the challenge of the 1990s was to seek not mere survival but a better standard of life and a complete eradication of the causes of conflict, ignorance, poverty, disease and crippling economic and social conditions. The need for a calculated approach had become even more imperative since the end of the cold war and the resultant political, economic and social restructuring. Experience of the multilateral process had shown that the response to such changes depended to a large extent on the political processes at work and the negotiating skills and strategies of the major international players and their partners. UNICEF had always played a leading role in the crusade for change; it should therefore have immense opportunities, in the current world climate, for intensifying its strategies, both in priority-setting and in galvanizing international awareness and commitment to the goals set forth in the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. Although UNICEF had done much during the past few years to change the lives of several million children and women throughout the world, a great deal still remained to be done.

86. Her Government greatly appreciated UNICEF's role in the immunization campaign and, although still a long way from that goal, was making every effort to attain the 75 per cent target which had been set in 1990. Cameroon also appreciated UNICEF's assistance in launching the Bamako Initiative in three provinces and the favourable impact on the availability of rural primary health care. The country's programme still placed major emphasis on subjects such as reducing maternal and infant mortality, wider immunization, better education for women and girls, better nutrition for children through baby-friendly hospitals and basic education for mothers, clean water and

(Mrs. Ngomba, Observer, Cameroon)

better sanitation, and a review of government policies in urban areas to deal, inter alia, with the problem of street children and crime.

87. Her delegation was grateful for UNICEF's efforts on behalf of Africa in particular and the developing world in general; the activities initiated and financed by UNICEF in celebrating the Day of the African Child illustrated UNICEF's commitment to improving the plight of the entire African continent. Malnutrition and disease, particularly AIDS, were increasing; and the continent's debt burden was such that, throughout the 1980s, certain international financial institutions had taken more out of the continent than they had put in. The Executive Director's report (E/ICEF/1992/2) did provide some hope, however, and pointed to opportunities for positive change.

88. Given the ongoing process of democratization in Africa, UNICEF should enhance its advocacy strategy and intensify its traditional role in promoting, through other agencies and financial institutions, measures to promote adjustment with a human face and ensure that human development was at the centre of all programmes and strategies. It should also consider further ways of raising funds in addition to convincing African Governments to reorient their expenditure towards social welfare programmes; without a reinforced fund-raising policy, the Executive Director's 10 specific proposals for a new world order, particularly his recommendations about reducing Africa's debt and providing the continent with sufficient external support to permit internal reform and recovery, could not be achieved.

89. Her delegation strongly commended the forthcoming International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, which would provide a unique opportunity for African Governments and their partners to reassess priorities and commitments to a common strategy, and would facilitate discussion of supplementary funding directed towards development projects rather than to short-term emergency interventions.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

1992 regular session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 June 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. SETH (India)

CONTENTS

General debate (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Ms. M. A. Cuna, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that the Executive Director's report (E/ICEF/1992/2 (Part I and Part II and Add.1)) provided a complete and well-organized overview of the main fields of activities and priorities of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Considerable progress had been achieved in the areas of primary health care, universal immunization and the control of diarrhoeal diseases, cholera, acute respiratory infections, malaria and dracunculiasis. UNICEF had continued to cooperate closely with other United Nations agencies in order to curb the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which caused acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

2. Such basic activities of the Fund as assistance in the preparation of national programmes of action for children and mechanisms to carry out such programmes, as well as the promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, had been both well-balanced and cost-efficient. The Fund's emergency operations and its provision of humanitarian assistance to children in especially difficult circumstances were particularly important. UNICEF should further develop its unique experience in those areas. The Executive Director's proposals on the reform of the United Nations system of operational activities, especially on the enhancement of inter-agency coordination both at Headquarters and in the field, and priority-setting, merited serious consideration.

3. His delegation favoured broader use of the Fund's potential to provide assistance to Russia, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe during their arduous period of economic transition. The social and economic instability, decline in the standard of living and reduced State financing that accompanied the changes taking place in those countries adversely affected the situation of children in such areas as health care, pre-school education and the production of baby foods.

4. In Russia, the natural growth of population continued to decline. The infant mortality rate had risen to 16.8 per 1,000 for children up to the age of one year. Approximately 11 million families in the Russian Federation, including over 40 per cent of all children in the country, lived in extremely difficult circumstances. The situation was particularly critical in the northern regions of Russia. Families with disabled children, student families, many single-parent families, families of pregnant and breast-feeding mothers, families with many children, and families of refugees and forced migrants were the most disadvantaged.

5. Every year in Russia approximately 30,000 children were born with congenital and hereditary diseases. Some 70 to 75 per cent of such children were disabled, and their number had doubled over the past decade. Every year

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, Russian Federation)

more than 50,000 children were left without parental care. There were currently some 330,000 such children. Approximately 90 per cent of the inmates of children's homes were "social orphans", since they had living parents who for various reasons were unable to perform their parental duties.

6. Every year approximately 2,000 children and juveniles in Russia committed suicide and some 50,000 children left their families. A new category of young social outcasts who lived for months in cellars, attics and railway stations had emerged. Crimes and other offences by minors had increased, as had the number of serious crimes committed not only by juveniles but also by children. The number of crimes committed by gangs had also risen.

7. Those statistics gave only a partial picture of the complex situation of children in Russia. Unfortunately, the Russian Federation was currently unable to undertake a comprehensive programme that would solve those problems completely. A number of major government child-welfare programmes were on the verge of collapse.

8. UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) had recognized the need to provide assistance to Russia and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in order to prevent the further deterioration of the situation of children and other vulnerable groups during the transitional period. His delegation hoped that the Executive Board at its current session would adopt a decision on the practical implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the UNICEF/WHO mission to Russia in February 1992, and on further cooperation between UNICEF and the Russian Federation. The Fund's increased assistance to the Russian Federation should not be detrimental to the interests of developing countries, and supplementary resources would have to be mobilized. The Russian Federation would continue to cooperate fully with UNICEF and, as far as possible, participate in the financing of the Fund's activities.

9. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy) said that UNICEF had been particularly instrumental in carrying out successful humanitarian operations and establishing such innovative practices as "corridors of peace" and "days of tranquillity". The Fund should further develop and extend such operations, while respecting the integrated United Nations response necessary for the effectiveness and continuity of emergency interventions.

10. International developments called for multilateral organizations to play an increasing role in the promotion of the human factor in sustainable development processes. The Executive Board should specify the commitments and modalities that would allow UNICEF to display optimum operational effectiveness and administrative efficiency. In order to respond adequately to new international expectations, the United Nations system must integrate and coordinate its operational activities and stimulate national execution and capacity-building with the involvement of local communities and non-governmental organizations. The participation of UNICEF in inter-agency

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

task forces and joint commissions and missions could help the Fund identify key areas and priorities. More than ever, UNICEF activities should be action-oriented and stimulate national responses.

11. Italy had taken a number of steps to respond to the challenges raised by the World Summit for Children. An Ad Hoc National Commission had been established with the mandate of preparing Italy's national plan of action. Preparations for the implementation of that plan of action were well under way and should be completed in the near future.

12. In spite of the severe budgetary constraints imposed by its financial situation, Italy had done its utmost to maintain the level of its financial contributions to UNICEF. It commended donor countries that had increased their contributions to the Fund and hoped that cost-sharing would be distributed more equitably among donors, especially the major donors. In 1991, Italy had contributed 1 billion lire for emergency operations in the southern Sudan and, recently, 4 billion lire had been approved as supplementary funds, 2 billion of which had been earmarked for street children in Brazil.

13. With the end of the cold war, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had begun the transition from centrally planned to market economies. The issues involved in that complex process defied simple solution. The United Nations system and UNICEF in particular should work closely with the Governments of those countries and with international organizations and agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as the European Community to identify areas of comparative advantage in order to maximize the efficiency of their various interventions.

14. Humanitarian activities should be closely linked to rehabilitation and sustainable development prospects, the main purpose of which should be to stimulate and catalyse the many existing and underemployed resources in the countries considered, while at the same time promoting participation and a convergence of efforts. In that regard, the Italian Parliament had approved a new law on assistance to Central and Eastern Europe. Additional funds had been earmarked for that purpose and did not affect the amount of Italy's official development assistance (ODA).

15. The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would enable the United Nations system to respond in a coordinated, prompt and efficient manner to the increasing number of emergency situations. His delegation was confident that all agencies, and especially UNICEF, would lend their full support to the new department and its activities.

16. His delegation greatly appreciated the work undertaken by the budget reference group to review the budget format. However, while it endorsed the group's proposals for the review of the existing budget documents, it

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

considered that some of the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) should be taken into account and reflected in the Executive Board's decisions.

17. The findings and suggestions contained in the progress report on the Bamako Initiative (E/ICEF/1992/L.6) could help improve the conceptual framework and practical implementation of the programmes and activities promoted by the Initiative. The evaluation sponsored by the Government of the United Kingdom in cooperation with other bilateral and multilateral agencies, including UNICEF, could result in a major expansion of the Initiative.

18. Mr. VACEK (Czechoslovakia) said that, while Czechoslovakia was experiencing difficulties in implementing the principles and conclusions adopted by the World Summit for Children, particularly during a period of economic transition, it had managed to develop long-term programmes to support and protect children and youth. A report on the state of children in Czechoslovakia had been prepared on the initiative of the National Committee for UNICEF, and a working group of volunteers had been established.

19. In Africa, conditions for children were the worst in the world and were expected to deteriorate in the years to come. The international community should respond adequately in order to reverse that negative trend. The political and economic developments in the European and Asian countries that had dismantled totalitarian regimes in the past three years also posed pressing problems. Armed conflicts had broken out in some of those countries, and the fall of totalitarian regimes had brought to light long-neglected social problems of children and young people. The transition to a market-oriented economy further complicated those problems.

20. Czechoslovakia was not itself applying for humanitarian aid. On the contrary, in 1991 it had granted considerable assistance to other countries. However, it urgently required UNICEF involvement in the areas of advocacy, policy-making and technical assistance.

21. His delegation did not entirely agree with the proposed UNICEF activities listed in document E/ICEF/1992/L.14. It was surprising that the recommendations regarding assistance to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were limited to assistance from rather uncertain supplementary funds. Although his delegation fully understood the reasons that had led the Executive Director to make such a recommendation, it believed that the Executive Board should approve the conclusion listed in Option A, namely, the granting of assistance from both general resources and supplementary funds. Assistance to children affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe should constitute a separate programme.

22. His delegation considered that the chairmanship of the Executive Board should be subject to the practice of rotation by geographical groups. It fully supported the adoption of the Standard Basic Cooperation Agreement as

(Mr. Vacek, Czechoslovakia)

submitted and was in favour of maintaining the current organizational structure for external relations activities at UNICEF headquarters. It greatly appreciated the policy paper on education for development (E/ICEF/1992/L.8), long awaited by the National Committees. Czechoslovakia also supported the conclusions of the progress report on the Bamako Initiative (E/ICEF/1992/L.6) and the report on the UNICEF programme approach to the prevention of HIV/AIDS (E/ICEF/1992/L.11). With respect to the document entitled "Controlling acute respiratory infections" (E/ICEF/1992/L.12), his delegation considered that the roles and responsibilities of UNICEF and WHO should be more clearly defined.

23. One of the basic UNICEF documents was "An overview of UNICEF policies, organization and working methods" (E/ICEF/670/Rev.3). As that document had not been revised since 1984, it was high time to update it. Finally, his delegation fully supported the Executive Director's proposal to improve the efficiency of the Executive Board and to strengthen its bureau.

24. Mr. SCHILLING (Germany) noted that, although Germany faced serious budgetary constraints as a result of the process of unification, the country's contribution to UNICEF general resources had steadily increased. In addition to its regular contribution, the German Government had always provided additional funding and grants for emergencies and would continue to do so in the future. More than 8,000 volunteers of the German National Committee for UNICEF were participating in mobilization and fund-raising campaigns; as a result of their efforts, UNICEF continued to be the most popular United Nations organization in Germany.

25. His delegation fully agreed with the priorities UNICEF had set in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995 (E/ICEF/1992/3). The Fund and its Executive Director should continue their efforts to enhance the efficiency of UNICEF at both the field and headquarters levels and strengthen inter-agency cooperation. In that regard, the German Government was pleased to note that the coordination of United Nations humanitarian emergency assistance was being improved.

26. Germany had undertaken the necessary steps to comply with the World Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children. Earlier in the year, Germany had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

27. Performance in the field was the key to the success of UNICEF. The Fund's achievements in the area of immunization were outstanding. UNICEF should continue its efforts in that area, follow up on successful programmes so that they promoted sustainable levels of development and continue to develop strategies to benefit the poorest segments of society. His delegation commended the joint efforts of UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WHO to control acute respiratory infections, as well as the Fund's cooperation with WHO in combating the AIDS pandemic. He noted with

(Mr. Schilling, Germany)

satisfaction that primary health care remained at the top of the Fund's agenda of activities, and welcomed the evaluation of the Bamako Initiative that was being sponsored by Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

28. The problem of underdevelopment would not be solved unless the international community took vigorous measures to prevent overpopulation and lower high birth rates. UNICEF should step up its efforts in the fields of family planning and birth control, in close cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO and other relevant agencies. Both donor and recipient countries should be prepared to put the well-being and the needs of society's most vulnerable groups at the top of their national agendas. Extremely high military budgets in many countries were another major obstacle to the improvement of the well-being of children and women. No external assistance could make up for the diversion of scarce budgetary resources from the social to the military sector.

29. Democracy and human rights were of fundamental significance for development, and good governance was vital to economic and social progress. The fulfilment of those preconditions would ensure that development aid benefited those who really needed it. Moreover, investing in people, especially young people, would enable the citizens of developing countries to help themselves.

30. Mr. LEAKEY (Jamaica) welcomed the report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1992/2 (Parts I and II)) and endorsed the proposals contained in the informal paper entitled "Ten points for reform in the United Nations system's operational activities".

31. As a follow-up to the World Summit for Children, his Government had prepared a national programme of action which would shortly be presented to the Cabinet. With continued UNICEF support, Jamaica hoped to broaden the scope of child survival and development activities, expand basic urban services and intensify advocacy and social mobilization efforts.

32. Like most developing countries, Jamaica was endeavouring to fulfil its moral and legal obligations to children in the face of severe economic constraints. However, as his country attached great importance to the principle of a "first call for children", it had managed to maintain all of its child care programmes. Two new initiatives which sought to meet the needs of children in especially difficult circumstances were a community-based rehabilitation programme for disabled children and a programme to address the problems of street children.

33. Under an agreement between the Governments of Jamaica and the Netherlands and the Netherlands Committee for UNICEF, the "debt relief for children" initiative would be implemented in Jamaica over the next three years. Programme delivery would be enhanced in such areas as health care, children in especially difficult circumstances and women and socio-economic development.

(Mr. Leakey, Jamaica)

His Government wished to propose that the definition of children in especially difficult circumstances should be broadened to include children who were either infected with AIDS or were at risk of contracting it, those who were born addicted to narcotic drugs, and those who were left without minimum care because their parents were incapacitated by drug abuse. That proposal sought to address the rapid increase over the past two years in the number of children in the developing world who fell into one or more of those categories.

34. With regard to the status of women, the UNICEF approach, which sought to empower women by giving them access to economic resources and social services, was of particular relevance in Jamaica, where 42 per cent of all households were headed by women. At the same time, the Fund's increasing emphasis on parenting had the potential to ensure that more men bore equal responsibility for children's welfare within the family. In preparation for the International Year of the Family in 1994, UNICEF should place greater emphasis on promoting family life as a means of decreasing the number of children in especially difficult circumstances.

35. In the context of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995 (E/ICEF/1992/3), his delegation particularly supported strategies that promoted sustainability, national capacity-building, community participation, inter-agency cooperation and development with a human face. His Government appreciated the leading role played by UNICEF in addressing the human cost of structural adjustment policies and welcomed the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean (SAFLAC), which sought to mitigate the adverse social consequences of such policies. Jamaica shared the concern of UNICEF for African children who had been victims of drought and civil war and for children in Central and Eastern Europe who were likely to suffer as a result of the difficult transformations which their societies were undergoing. UNICEF should obtain additional resources to meet those new needs without prejudice to its existing commitments.

36. The medium-term plan, however well formulated, could not be implemented unless sufficient organizational capabilities existed. His delegation therefore welcomed the increased emphasis on human resources planning and personnel management, and appreciated the work of the budget reference group, which had formulated guidelines for the presentation of the 1994-1995 budget, to be adopted by the Board in 1993.

37. Mr. LUNA (Peru) said that all efforts to address the problems of the world's children should be focused on implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children. Accordingly, bilateral donors, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations should provide UNICEF with sufficient resources to support Summit follow-up activities. National programmes of action should also be strengthened. Some of the national programmes already submitted contained innovative fund-raising

(Mr. Luna, Peru)

proposals which could be of great value to other countries, and it might be useful for UNICEF to prepare a handbook on internal resource-gathering, taking into account the experience of countries with efficient fund-raising mechanisms.

38. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean were currently forced to implement measures in the social sector to offset the burden which macroeconomic adjustment placed on the most vulnerable groups. A major thrust of those efforts was addressing the needs of children in order to honour the commitments made in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and at the World Summit for Children. The region had taken an active part in the follow-up to the World Summit, and his country had been the first to submit a national programme of action which contained an objective analysis of the situation of Peruvian children and women, acknowledged existing problems and proposed clear solutions for the short and medium terms.

39. Those problems should be viewed in the light of the severe economic crisis afflicting Peru. The country's infant mortality rate was one of the highest in Latin America, while approximately 45 per cent of all Peruvian children suffered from some degree of malnutrition. In 1990, only 52 per cent of the population had had access to safe drinking water. In the past 15 years, the maternal mortality rate had reached 33 per 10,000 live births.

40. The primary objectives of the programme of action were to reduce the infant mortality rate to 50 per 1,000 live births, the under-five mortality rate to 70 per 1,000 live births, and the maternal mortality rate to 15 per 10,000 live births by the year 2000. Other goals included reducing the incidence of malnutrition by 50 per cent and increasing the supply of safe drinking water to ensure 94 per cent coverage by the year 2000.

41. His Government wished to express its appreciation to UNICEF for the generous support the Fund had provided to programmes to combat cholera in Peru and other countries. The progress made should, however, be viewed in the context of sustained action over the medium term in order to ensure that the agreed targets in such areas as health infrastructure and basic services could be met.

42. Much of the Fund's success in Latin America could be attributed to SAFLAC, which had played an important role as a catalyst; accordingly, a new impetus should be given to the Facility at the current session of the Board. The Latin American and Caribbean States had submitted a draft decision designed to strengthen and ensure the continuity of SAFLAC, and he hoped that it would be unanimously supported by the Board.

43. Mr. LEBA (Observer, Organization of African Unity) said that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in close collaboration with UNICEF, was preparing for an international Donors Conference on Assistance to African Children, to be held at Dakar, Senegal, in November 1992. In June 1991, the

(Mr. Leba, Observer, OAU)

Council of Ministers of OAU had called upon all States members of OAU to prepare national programmes of action as a follow-up to the World Summit for Children; requested the OAU secretariat to convene a special donors' conference in 1992 to mobilize support for children; and requested assistance from the UNICEF Executive Board.

44. Over the past year, cooperation between OAU, UNICEF and the Government of Senegal had sped conference preparations. The conference had been publicized at all national, regional and intergovernmental meetings. OAU had developed a budget for the conference with technical assistance from UNICEF and was currently mobilizing contributions from individuals and organizations. He urged all member countries of the Executive Board to send representatives to the conference.

45. Mrs. STEWART (United States of America) said that UNICEF must not only sustain its achievements, but also respond to an increasing number of new and urgent global needs. The Secretary-General had acknowledged that reform of the United Nations Secretariat was essential if the Organization's response to those new challenges was to be both efficient and effective. Her delegation therefore welcomed the views put forward by UNICEF on that subject in the paper entitled "Ten points for reform in the United Nations system's operational activities".

46. UNICEF was to be commended for the progress made thus far in planning the follow-up to the World Summit for Children. During the past year, her Government had helped many other countries prepare national programmes of action; the United States programme of action would be issued later in 1992. It was to be hoped that all national programmes would result in specific, coordinated actions to benefit children.

47. Her delegation welcomed the additional information on external relations provided in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995 (E/ICEF/1992/3). Similar attention should be given to external relations planning in future country programmes as well.

48. The United States strongly endorsed the Fund's contribution to the global fight against AIDS, its support for family planning and vaccine supply, and its response to emergencies. Now more than ever, collaboration with other agencies must be pursued in all areas to ensure that resources and energy were focused on the achievement of world-wide child survival and development goals.

49. While the achievement of the 1990 goal of universal child immunization was of undeniable significance, sustaining and expanding immunization coverage throughout the world, particularly in Africa, was equally important. UNICEF should continue to work with countries in order to ensure an adequate supply of quality vaccines; in that connection, the Fund's contribution to the children's vaccine initiative deserved full support.

(Mrs. Stewart, United States)

50. Many of the significant changes that had occurred in the world during the past year had placed hundreds of thousands of children in urgent need of services of which UNICEF was an irreplaceable provider. The Fund's contribution was vital to relief efforts in Iraq, Somalia and other countries in need, and her delegation was proud of UNICEF staff, who worked in difficult circumstances and often at personal risk to provide emergency aid. While the capability of UNICEF to respond rapidly to emergency situations was appreciated, she urged the Fund to cooperate fully through the collaborative mechanisms established by the new Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

51. An equally important opportunity for assistance had arisen in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and her delegation supported the Executive Director's recommendations outlined in document E/ICEF/1992/L.14. It was essential for the activities of all United Nations agencies in that area to be carefully coordinated and for overhead and administrative costs to be kept as low as possible. In addition, programme activities must lead to national capacity-building so that a rapid transition to self-sustained national action could take place in those countries.

52. Efforts in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States should in no way detract from the priority which the Executive Board had given to the developing countries, particularly those in Africa. She strongly encouraged UNICEF to follow up the recommendations of the Bamako Initiative evaluation. Progress in child development would also be measured by action taken to promote and improve basic education, and her delegation supported the actions to achieve that goal described in document E/ICEF/1992/L.8. Those efforts depended upon the collaborative relationships which UNICEF maintained with UNESCO and the National Committees for UNICEF, which would in turn play an important role in UNICEF activities in the former Soviet Union.

53. Programme effectiveness would also depend on the cost-effective management of administrative and financial resources. UNICEF had done much to improve the structure and format of budget documents and streamline global funds. The UNICEF secretariat and the budget reference group had made substantial progress in addressing some of the concerns which her delegation had raised during previous Executive Board sessions about the absence of a clear and justifiable link between programme proposals and the administrative structure required to implement them.

54. The Executive Board would soon have to take an important decision with regard to the location of UNICEF headquarters. Her delegation was prepared to consider the possibility of relocation within the New York metropolitan area and to choose the option that was most consistent with sound financial management.

(Mrs. Stewart, United States)

55. The growth in programmes and resources warranted continued scrutiny and improved governance procedures. The recommendations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5 would help to rationalize the Board's work, but more could and should be done: better scheduling and a conscientious review of draft decisions and their reporting requirements would help.

56. Mr. HAQUE (Observer for Bangladesh) said that the current session of the Executive Board was a special one for his country in view of the fact that UNICEF had conferred the Maurice Pate Award for 1992 on the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). Bangladesh had succeeded in overcoming both man-made and natural disasters with great fortitude and resilience. Poverty did not act as a barrier to change; indeed, the poorest and most disadvantaged seemed to have the greatest urge to learn, to educate themselves and to devote their limited energies towards the creation of a better life for their children.

57. More than 50 per cent of the population of Bangladesh was under the age of 19. Nevertheless, the country had achieved a near miracle by increasing immunization coverage from only 2 per cent in 1985 to more than 80 per cent in 1990, and in that achievement UNICEF had been a great partner. Wishing to build on the success of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI), Bangladesh had launched its "EPI-plus" programme which would provide, in addition to the five antigens, six additional services - three for the mother and three for the child. Mothers received iron supplementation, risk-screening during pregnancy, and family-planning services, while children benefited from vitamin A distribution, diarrhoeal-disease control, and the promotion of breast-feeding. Women, and mothers in particular, were the focal point of the Government's concerns, as could be seen in the country's fourth Five-Year Plan.

58. With regard to water and sanitation, 80 per cent of rural households in Bangladesh were within 150 metres of a tube well, 800,000 of which had been sunk with the help of UNICEF. Under the Bangladesh National Plan of Action all families should enjoy access to safe water by the year 1995 and sanitary-latrine coverage would increase from 8 per cent to 35 per cent.

59. Primary education had been compulsory since 1990. The adoption of non-formal educational approaches and help from non-governmental organizations had brought girls, in particular, into education and training for life skills. While the primary education enrolment rate was 70 per cent, the drop-out rate was high, and the Government hoped to reduce it. In an effort to encourage girls to complete their basic education, girls in rural areas were provided with free education up to class VIII. Whereas only 4 per cent of primary school teachers had been women in 1978, the figure now stood at 19 per cent, with a target of 50 per cent set for the year 2000.

(Mr. Hague, Observer, Bangladesh)

60. Bangladesh endorsed the Executive Director's report and supported the programme elements, flexibility and decentralization of UNICEF activities, which ensured smooth implementation and high-quality programme delivery.

61. The recently concluded United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been a watershed development in the protection and restoration of the environment and sustainable development. The chapters of Agenda 21 dealing with children, youth, women and health should lead to appropriate follow-up action by the Executive Board, since children and environment were inseparable.

62. Ms. WANG Shuxian (China), welcomed the fact that one year after the World Summit for Children, most countries had taken steps to implement the World Declaration and Plan of Action, and 117 countries had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Such progress would have been impossible without UNICEF support. The past year had also been one of success for UNICEF country programmes: some 127 countries had implemented programmes of cooperation, and immunization and oral rehydration strategies alone saved the lives of more than 4 million children a year. The social mobilization, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation aspects of UNICEF country programmes had had a particularly positive impact.

63. Even so, poverty and disease still claimed the lives of millions of children every year, one out of five people still lacked clean water and safe sanitation, and roughly one fourth of the world's adult population was still illiterate. Those were all great obstacles to child survival, protection and development. Peace and development were still the basic prerequisites for child development, and the international community should establish a new international political and economic order that would allow children to grow up in a peaceful and stable environment. China supported the UNICEF principle of a "first call for children" and the strategy for assisintg Africa first.

64. China had honoured the commitment it had made at the World Summit for Children by promulgating the National Programme of Action for Child Development in China in the 1990s in February 1992. The Programme stipulated that by the year 2000 infant and under-five mortality rates would be reduced by one third, maternal mortality rates and malnutrition in children under five would be halved, and illiteracy in the 15-40 age group would be eradicated. In December 1991 the Standing Committee of the Seventh National People's Congress had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in September 1991 it had approved the Protection of Minors Act.

65. Cooperation in recent years between UNICEF and China had been most satisfactory. Thanks to such cooperation, China had achieved the child immunization target of 85 per cent at the provincial and county levels, trained more than 100,000 village doctors and improved the quality of maternal and child health care. China had promoted the universalization of elementary education and trained more than 60,000 kindergarten and primary school

(Ms. Wang Shuxian, China)

teachers, with importance attached to the education of girls in remote, minority and poverty areas. China had also helped women to overcome illiteracy and had organized training courses to provide them with practical skills and income-generating activities that could help improve their living conditions and those of their children.

66. Mr. BANGALI (Sierra Leone) said that cooperation between his Government and UNICEF, especially during the past three years, had produced considerable improvement in the somewhat dismal statistics regarding women and children which had plagued his country for so long. Sierra Leone's infant mortality rate, once among the world's highest, had fallen to 153 per 1,000 live births, and there had been equally significant reductions in the under-five and maternal mortality rates. The full immunization coverage rate for children had reached the target of 75 per cent in 1990, and there were indications that that percentage had increased in 1991. To ensure the durability of those achievements, UNICEF had supported the creation of an elaborate support structure which promoted self-sustaining primary health-care facilities, water and environmental sanitation, women in development and basic education.

67. Sierra Leone was undergoing considerable difficulties, caused partly by the rebel invasion of its Eastern and Southern Provinces. The forced exodus of its people from those areas, coupled with a large influx of refugees - mainly women and children - from Liberia had aggravated an already bad economic situation. The loss of revenue from the Eastern Province - the main revenue-earning region - had had a significant impact on the country's economy and had wrought havoc upon the living conditions of the inhabitants. Yet that situation had not halted the implementation of the Bamako Initiative, although the pace had been slower than that initially envisaged. The network of primary health units was now largely managed and financed by the communities they served through an effective cost-sharing system, and financial and technical support from UNICEF for the construction of more than 1,000 improved wells had ensured the supply of clean water to thousands of rural children and women, drastically reducing deaths from diarrhoea and related diseases.

68. An important development had been the agreement by the Ministry of Health to allow communities to retain some of the funds generated at the local level through user fees. Some 20 per cent of local funds were currently retained for the upkeep of health facilities and to offset the cost of providing services to those who could not pay, and his delegation appealed to donor countries to increase their support for such programmes.

69. Sierra Leone fully shared the views expressed in the Executive Director's report concerning a new order for children. UNICEF should play a more active role in reducing the widening gaps between North and South in the areas of tertiary education, research and development expenditure and the proportion of scientific and technical personnel, given the significant impact of technological progress in the world. Sierra Leone endorsed, in particular, the proposals contained in paragraphs 28 (a), (d), (f) and (h) of the report (E/ICEF/1992/2 (Part I)).

(Mr. Bangali, Sierra Leone)

70. His delegation commended UNICEF efforts to strengthen women's role in development and the Fund's continued support for national policies to advance the status of women and girls. Concurring with UNICEF that women played a key role as community mobilizers and health agents, his Government also attached great importance to the survival, protection and development of the girl child and aimed to make all facilities, particularly health and education services, accessible to all children regardless of their sex. While customary initiation rites were still practised in Sierra Leone, they were increasingly losing their cultural significance, and there were few discernible differences between the current situations of male and female children.

71. His delegation fully supported UNICEF efforts to integrate AIDS activities into its country programmes, believing that a heightened global awareness of the disease would facilitate the development of a global strategy to combat its spread.

72. Sierra Leone supported the Executive Director's recommendation regarding the revised medium-term plan (E/ICEF/1992/3, para. 330) and the budget proposals submitted to the Board, particularly the innovative and cost-cutting measures initiated by UNICEF. It was to be hoped that the continuing economic and social crises in recipient countries would not derail those admirable initiatives. His delegation also welcomed the report of ACABQ on the proposed budget formats (E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.18).

73. In conclusion, he drew attention to the need for the chairmanship of the Board to rotate among the different regional groups in order to ensure that the principle of equity was properly observed and to bring UNICEF in line with the practice followed elsewhere in the United Nations system.

74. Mr. ASSA'EDI (Yemen) commended the Executive Director's report and the specific recommendations contained in it for the new international order, which his country supported inasmuch as they afforded an appropriate general framework for collective international action to put an end to poverty, ignorance and disease. During Yemen's 30-year relationship with UNICEF prior to unification in May 1990, both parts of the country had benefited from a large number of child education, adult literacy, health and drinking-water supply programmes. He hoped that that cooperation would continue in the future. His country was also concerned that the international instruments adopted by the World Summit for Children should be translated into programmes and plans of action appropriate to the current situation in his country, in accordance with the national population strategy and the establishment of a democratic order permitting broad popular participation.

75. In the light of the complex economic and social circumstances facing his country following the Gulf crisis and with the return of some 1 million Yemeni emigrants, and the influx of tens of thousands of displaced Somalis, many new problems had arisen. He expressed appreciation for the positive role that UNICEF had played and was playing in helping Yemen face those problems.

(Mr. Assa'edi, Yemen)

76. He commended the documentation of the session. He hoped that UNICEF would play a pioneer role at meetings and conferences convened by donor States. Developing countries should receive technical and material assistance in preparing and implementing national plans of action to implement international instruments on children. Special attention should be paid to the role of women in development and to women's active participation in programmes for providing education to all.

77. A study should be made of the best ways of helping countries that had been successful in the field of child immunization, and they should be assisted in ensuring successful follow-up. Special attention should also be paid to developing national expertise and skills so as to ensure self-reliance to the extent possible. The role of UNICEF in dealing with emergencies should be continued and developed.

78. He expressed appreciation for the efforts of UNICEF as reflected in the country programmes for the States of the Middle East and North Africa, particularly the new programme for Palestinian children contained in document E/ICEF/1992/P/L.32, which described the distressing situation of Palestinian women and children. UNICEF had been providing assistance to Palestinian refugee children since 1980, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/81. The new programme was the culmination of those humanitarian efforts and merited the highest praise.

79. It was regrettable that, under the new humanitarian order, some children were currently suffering from harsh and destructive circumstances in various places in the world, particularly in Iraq and Somalia. The tragic plight of those children should be accorded the highest priority. He commended the role played by UNICEF in drawing up area-focused programmes for Somalia in the light of the basic principles of the Bamako Initiative, which, in turn, would serve to build national capacity and raise the living standards of Somali women and children. The implementation of those programmes would take time, and he therefore hoped that there would be a continuation of essential humanitarian assistance to save women and children in Somalia from death and annihilation.

80. He agreed with the statement in the Executive Director's report that, in spite of the encouraging achievements which had culminated in the convening of the Summit for Children, the realization of strategies to promote child survival, protection and development continued to face challenges, particularly in the least developed countries. Cooperation and solidarity were called for to eliminate the root cause of childhood afflictions, namely, poverty. The international community must give the issue of poverty the same priority it gave peace and environmental protection on the agenda of the new humanitarian order.

81. He was confident that UNICEF, in keeping with its past record, would assume that responsibility, so that the expectations of the poor would be met

(Mr. Assa'edi, Yemen)

and disparities would be reduced. Governments and local societies must work together to promote equitable social and human growth, and the achievement of minimum targets for children must be regarded as the essence of the final development challenge of the twentieth century.

82. Mr. SILVA (Sri Lanka) said that his Government had responded to the needs of Sri Lankan children by preparing a national programme of action for children as a follow-up to the World Summit. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) would hold its second conference on children in September 1992 in Sri Lanka, with the aim of reviewing and strengthening the regional plan of action and achieving World Summit goals in the subregion. Sri Lanka was particularly pleased that the UNICEF Maurice Pate Award had been presented to a fellow member of SAARC, Bangladesh.

83. Sri Lanka had achieved the goal of 80 per cent coverage of universal child immunization (UCI) in 1989, and had continued to make progress in that area. It planned to eradicate polio and neonatal tetanus well before 1995, and its new country programme focused on the serious problem of malnutrition, which it hoped to reduce significantly in the near future.

84. Through government measures to meet basic needs and strengthen primary health care the infant mortality rate had been lowered in 1990 to 19.4 per 1,000 live births. Various nutrition plans had been implemented and were closely linked with the Janasaviya Programme for the elimination of poverty launched by President Ranasinghe Premadasa. In addition, Sri Lanka greatly valued the UNICEF initiatives to alleviate poverty, such as the joint UNICEF/ILO international workshop on poverty held in 1991 in Santiago.

85. Sri Lanka was one of the few countries which provided welfare services to women and children throughout its territory, even in areas affected by armed conflict, and its women and children were accorded the maximum share of society's resources, in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Declaration of the World Summit for Children. Health services in the conflict areas were functioning satisfactorily, thanks to the response by UNICEF and other agencies.

86. In 1990, a new Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Social Welfare had been established in response to the needs of refugees in general and children in particular. The Ministry had adopted measures to identify destitute children and reunited them with their families and in cooperation with other ministries and organiztaions was developing other social and educational projects for children in the conflict areas.

87. Sri Lanka commended UNICEF on its endeavours to prevent the spread of AIDS among children and pledged its full cooperation with UNICEF initiatives on AIDS. While his delegation applauded current efforts to streamline the United Nations system, it stressed that reorganization should not adversely affect the capacity of the UNICEF field office at Colombo, whose quick

(Mr. Silva, Sri Lanka)

response to emergencies in Sri Lanka had been greatly appreciated. Lastly, he commended UNICEF efforts to promote the integration of health services, a policy which had always been followed by Sri Lanka.

88. Mr. CAT (Uruguay) said that the situation of the family, and of children and women, in particular, had deteriorated to an unprecedented level in Uruguay as a result of the social and economic crisis of the 1980s, the inadequacy of the traditional sectoral approach of social policies and the lack of a comprehensive focus on poverty.

89. Accordingly, the Government had set itself the priority goal of tackling poverty on a comprehensive scale, with the active participation of the community as a whole. At the same time, specific measures were required to protect the most needy and vulnerable population groups, in particular women and children, from the adverse effects of economic adjustment policies. Valuable support had been received from UNICEF in the execution of programmes which provided care for children and women in marginal areas. Some 54 child and family care centres had been set up through the joint efforts of the Government, UNICEF - through SAFLAC - and non-governmental organizations, to provide care for pre-school children and to promote the social integration of underprivileged families.

90. Those and other measures, such as the baby-friendly hospital initiative, were designed to foster active community participation in the running of social services. His Government was endeavouring to ensure that its social policies were accompanied by a redefinition of strategies, the restructuring of State-run social care services and the reorientation of public social spending. The cooperation accorded to Uruguay in that undertaking by developed countries and such international organizations as UNICEF was invaluable.

91. The institution of MERCOSUR, the common market of the southern cone, had opened up new opportunities for Uruguay but also posed major challenges, which necessitated increased international cooperation to ensure the well-being of the Uruguayan people.

92. Uruguay's concern for the welfare of its children was manifested in the national plan of action it had formulated in response to the commitments of the World Summit for Children. The plan of action defined goals and activities at the national level for the next decade. Aimed at enhancing the quality of life of Uruguayan children and women, it had been prepared with the cooperation of health, education and nutrition sectors and the support of such international organizations as UNDP, UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

93. Uruguay attached particular importance to the current session of the Executive Board, since it would mark the first in which Uruguay received UNICEF assistance through general funds. While those funds only represented a

(Mr. Cat, Uruguay)

small portion of the country's total requirements for the implementation of the cooperation programme, they would be of great value in assisting the most needy children and women. He wished in that connection to express his delegation's gratitude to the UNICEF regional office for Argentina, Chile and Uruguay for its efforts on behalf of the children and women of Uruguay.

94. Mr. CURGUS (Yugoslavia) said that the processes of disintegration which currently racked his country had left tens of thousands of wounded and dead, almost 2 million refugees and displaced persons and a large number of civilians trapped in war zones. Some 800,000 exiles were children under the age of 15. It was obvious that coordinated efforts by all sides and by the international community as a whole were vital to mitigate the suffering of those people, and in particular the most vulnerable groups.

95. Accordingly, his Government was making every effort to ensure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children were implemented. It had provided substantial humanitarian relief to refugees within its territory and beyond, abjuring considerations of nationality or religious affiliation. Numerous appeals had been made to the warring sides, urging compliance with articles 22, 36 and 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the unobstructed evacuation of mothers and children from embattled areas and the free transport of foodstuffs and medical supplies.

96. The harsh economic sanctions recently imposed on Yugoslavia had seriously undermined the country's ability to continue its humanitarian relief activities, and their impact on refugees in its territory, 80 per cent of whom were women and children, was extremely adverse. The embargo affected even humanitarian relief provided by international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF. He appealed to the Executive Board to take steps to correct that situation and to ensure that the activities of humanitarian organizations and UNICEF were exempted from the sanctions regime.

97. Yugoslavia believed that UNICEF was a forum in which all political differences should be set aside in favour of cooperation for the benefit of the world's children. Under the new Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, promulgated in April 1992, the Federal Republic would continue to observe the rights and obligations assumed by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international relations, including its membership in the United Nations and UNICEF, and it remained fully committed to the Charter of the United Nations. His delegation would therefore make every effort to promote the interests of UNICEF and the success of the current Board session.

98. He conveyed the sincere gratitude of the Government and peoples of Yugoslavia to all who had helped mitigate the suffering of children in his

(Mr. Curgus, Yugoslavia)

country, mentioning in particular the special role of UNICEF, its Executive Director and its staff. For the first time in its history, and after 10 years as an active donor to UNICEF, Yugoslavia had become the recipient of substantial aid from the Fund. Every effort must be made to ensure that Yugoslav children survived the horror and destruction of war and to overcome the national and religious divisions which had caused the country to disintegrate.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.